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THE DISPOSITION OF REPORTED CHILD ABUSE

by

MARC F. MADEN

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Urban Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY


Portland State University


1977


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TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:


The members of the Committee approve the dissertation of
Marc F. Maden presented May 27, 1977.



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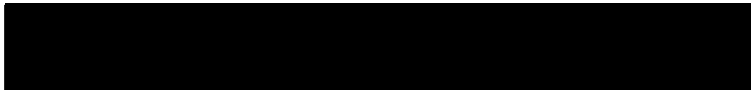
In honor of my father

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF Marc F. Maden for the Doctor of
Philosophy in Urban Studies presented May 27, 1977.

Title: The Disposition of Reported Child Abuse in Multnomah County,
Oregon.

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:


James E. Weiss, Chairman


David F. Wrench


Arthur C. Emlen

Child abuse is a significant contemporary community problem. Child abuse authorities are divided over the question of whether public intervention in the child abuse problem should be executed by law enforcement or social services agencies. Many jurisdictions, such as Multnomah County, Oregon, reflect this basic disagreement by authorizing the involvement of both of these agencies.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a relationship between what happens to child abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators and the community agency - law enforcement or social services (the Children's Services Division)-which investigated the case.

Data were collected from the population of child abuse reports originating from Multnomah County between September, 1975 and January, 1977.

These data included: (1) the pertinent demographic characteristics of the study population; (2) the community sources that reported the suspected abuse; (3) the agencies that received and investigated those reports; and (4) the disposition of the cases.

In order to test the study hypothesis, the investigating agency was related to the disposition of the child abuse cases. The study data indicated that the disposition of reported child abuse was related to the agency which investigated the cases. Specifically, the cases investigated by a law enforcement agency compared with the Children's Services Division were more likely to result in the removal of the victims from their home. In contrast, social service referrals for their families and community action directed to the perpetrators were more likely when the cases were investigated by the Children's Services Division compared to a law enforcement agency. When the cases were investigated jointly by the Children's Services Division and a law enforcement agency, the abuse victims were most likely to be separated from their families, the families were most likely to be referred for social services, and community action was most likely to be directed to the perpetrators.

Since disposition may be directly related to characteristics of the study population, the relationship between disposition and investigating agency was controlled for these characteristics. The controlled analysis of the data generally confirmed the findings of the study, but revealed that (1) disposition was directly associated with certain characteristics of the population and (2) the relationship between disposition and investigating agency was modified by several characteristics. These findings, however, are largely harmonized to the general study findings when interpreted in light of the structure of the community's child abuse "system"

and the interrelationships among the characteristics of the population.

The study findings lead to the conclusion that a choice of agencies to investigate child abuse reports results in differential, and perhaps unequal treatment of child abuse victims, their families and the perpetrators.

PREFACE

This study was conducted with the cooperation of the Multnomah County Juvenile Court, the Honorable Jean Lewis, presiding judge. The study was conducted on behalf of the Children's Services Division, Oregon State Department of Human Resources and the author was designated a voluntary employee for that specific purpose.

The observations, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this dissertation are those solely of the author and do not necessarily represent the Multnomah County Juvenile Court or the Children's Services Division.

All prudent security procedures were instituted to preserve the confidentiality of records. Any materials deemed confidential under Oregon Revised Statutes 418.770 have been destroyed by incineration.

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One of the most pleasant experiences upon completing a dissertation is the recollection of the individuals whose contributions brought this endeavor to fruition. At the risk of inadvertently omitting one of the many I want to give individual thanks to:

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW

Child abuse is a significant contemporary community problem. Although children have been maltreated throughout history, communities have only recently directed public resources toward the identification of child abuse and the protection of child abuse victims. The community response to the problem of child abuse has been uncommonly rapid, but notably inconsistent and probably inadequate. All fifty states have enacted specific child abuse legislation for the general purpose of invoking public involvement in instances of child abuse. There are, however, considerable differences and substantial disagreement about how individuals and organizations in the community handle child abuse incidents. Child abuse authorities do agree that the management of the child abuse problem largely depends on which community agency becomes involved. Specifically, professionals in the field of child abuse are divided over the questions of whether and what public intervention in child abuse cases should be executed law enforcement or social service agencies. Many jurisdictions, such as Multnomah County, Oregon reflect this basic disagreement by authorizing the involvement of both of these agencies.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether what happens to reported child abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators differs according to which community organization - a law enforcement or a social service agency - investigates reported incidents of child abuse.

This study is presented in seven chapters of the dissertation. Chapter II provides a brief history of the community response to the problems of child abuse with particular attention to the recent state legislation enacted to handle child abuse incidents. How this child abuse legislation is implemented is discussed and analyzed in Chapter III. More specifically, the authority and responsibilities of the law enforcement and social service agencies designated to receive and investigate reported child abuse are described and evaluative data on their respective performances are presented. On the basis of the data, the study hypothesis is stated in Chapter IV and grounded in a theory of organizations. A conceptual framework for the study is developed from the theory and the study hypothesis is operationally defined to ascertain the evidence with which to test it. The study methodology is also presented. Chapter V provides a comprehensive description of the study population with particular attention to the distribution of the study population among the caseloads of the investigating agencies. The data relating to the study hypothesis are introduced and then analyzed to provide evidence to support the hypothesis. Chapter VII concludes the dissertation by placing the findings within the perspective of the study.

The following chapter describes the historical and legislative background to the community response to the problem of child abuse. In particular, the major components of the current child abuse reporting legislation are presented, explained in the context of the professional literature, and compared to the child abuse reporting statutes in the study jurisdiction.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF CHILD ABUSE

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Violence against children is embedded in the lifestyle, literature, and law of society (Gil, 1970; Bakan, 1971; Areen, 1975). Children have been subject to a variety of maltreatment throughout history including infanticide, mutilation, abandonment, exploitation, neglect, physical and sexual abuse (Radbill, 1968). The biblical story of the Passover, the myth of Oedipous, and the Hansel and Gretel fairytale constitute examples of the theme of sacrificial children that runs deeply through our culture. Public authority to intervene on behalf of endangered children - parens patriae - has been historically proscribed by the supremacy of the doctrine of parental rights (Roberts, 1970; Areen, 1975). Henry, quoted in Kadushin (1974:223) suggests that:

The almost total absence of the social regulation of parent-child relations in our private-enterprise culture is a pivotal environmental factor making it necessary to institutionalize community concern.

Not until the late nineteenth century did so-called "cruelty to children" become a matter of public intervention symbolized by the establishment of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1871. However, during the first part of the twentieth century, public response to the maltreatment of children apparently diminished (Kadushin, 1974) despite the establishment of the juvenile court system (Nagi, 1976), the enactment of so-called "cruelty to children" statutes (Paulsen, 1966a), and the encouragement of the Federal

government in the form of financial incentives to child welfare agencies (Roberts, 1970).

Public involvement in the maltreatment of children in Oregon did not, characteristically, parallel, the national experience. On the one hand, the City of Portland was the first jurisdiction to assign police-women to protective services for girls (Knapp, 1961). On the other hand, the Oregon Legislative Assembly was more cautious than many other states in enacting a cruelty to children statute, [Oregon Laws (1933), Ch. 351 (repealed 1971)], although it imposed the most severe penalty on violators. A juvenile court with jurisdiction over maltreated children, however, had been created in 1905.

Public response to the so-called "battered child syndrome" was dramatically revived following the landmark publication by Kempe and his colleagues (Kempe et al., 1962). For example, a national sample survey found that 80% of the respondents were aware of the child abuse problem in their community (Gil and Noble, 1967). During the ensuing fifteen years, there has been substantial activity in child abuse research,¹ program development,² and legislation³. The enactment of Public Law 93-247, Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the establishment of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, and the proliferation of national, state, and local organizations involved in child abuse indicate

¹ See, for example, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Child Abuse and Neglect Research: Projects and Publications, May, 1976.

² See, for example, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Child Abuse and Neglect Programs, June, 1976.

³ See, for example, Education Commission of the States, A Comparison of the States' Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Statutes, March, 1975.

the extent to which child abuse has become a community problem (Viano, 1975; Gelles, 1976: cf. Gil, 1970). Nevertheless, child abuse authorities contend insufficient resources have been allocated to ameliorate the problem (Sussman, 1974; 1975).

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

In 1962 no state required the reporting of child abuse (Roberts, 1970), but within five years, all fifty states had enacted varying forms of child abuse reporting legislation (Paulsen, 1968). In 1963 Oregon was among the first generation of states to mandate certain persons to report intentional injury to designated public authorities. Paulsen (1966b:711) observed that in the history of the United States, few legislative proposals have been so widely adopted in so little time." Daly (1969) concludes that legislatures determined that existing cruelty to children statutes were inadequate.

Until instances of child abuse came to the attention of the authorities, it was evident that little could be done to protect the children involved or to deal with the perpetrators of the abuse (Daly, 1969:303).

In 1963 the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Health Education and Welfare and the Children's Division of the American Humane Association (AHA, 1963) issued the first model child abuse reporting laws. These models represented the recommendations of professionals and experts in field of child abuse and many of these provisions were incorporated in whole or in part by the respective state statutes (Sussman, 1974; 1975). More recently, model statutory revisions have been proposed that reflect the current state of knowledge and professional opinion (De Francis and Luncht, 1974; Sussman and Cohen. 1975; Education Commission of the States, 1976a; Children's Bureau, 1976).

In recent reviews, both De Francis and Lucht (1974) and Sussman (1974; 1975) analyze the statutory provisions that constitute the legislative response among the states to the problem of child abuse. Child abuse legislation may be typologically divided into three major components: (1) statutory language which articulates state policy; (2) statutes that establish operational definitions for the child abuse reporting law; and (3) statutory provisions that delegate authority and assign responsibilities for implementing child abuse legislation.

Policy

State policy regarding child abuse is frequently articulated in a so called "purpose clause" that generally precedes substantive statutory provisions. Sussman, (1974; 1975: 59) observes that:

Although such clauses have little or no binding impact, they are often of great assistance in directing administrative procedures and judicial interpretations of the intent and scope of the act. In child abuse reporting legislation, purpose clauses often disclose the nature of the response and the extent to which the state will proceed in protecting children.

De Francis and Lucht (1974) determined that child abuse reporting legislation in thirty-four states contain purpose clauses, but Sussman (1974; 1975) indicates that there is an apparent trend toward eliminating them. All states with purpose clauses affirm that the principal objective of child abuse reporting laws is to protect victims and prevent abuse (Sussman, 1974; 1975). Twenty-three states include the supplementary objective of providing social services and fifteen state statutes contain the additional objective of preserving family unity (Sussman, 1974; 1975).

In their analysis of purpose clauses, De Francis and Lucht (1974:3) divide the principal objective into: (1) treatment for "present injuries"

and (2) protection from "further abuse." These authors contend that prevention of further abuse is subject to interpretation according to prevailing social philosophy. Those who equate prevention with punishment may interpret the purpose clause as an instruction to criminally prosecute all perpetrators (De Francis and Lucht, 1974) and/or routinely invoke the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Those who believe that the prevention of child abuse is accomplished by ameliorating psychosocial conditions may adopt a social service approach (De Francis and Lucht, 1974). Sussman (1974; 1975:60) finds that:

Most commentators seem to agree that the law should be focused on custody and protection of the child before all else, and not upon punitive action against the perpetrator.

Oregon appended a purpose clause to its child abuse reporting law in 1971 [Oregon Laws (1971), Ch. 451, Sec. 1] which stated that:

. . . for the purpose of facilitating the use of protective social services to prevent further abuse and to safeguard and enhance the welfare of abused children, it is necessary and in the public interest to require mandatory reports and investigations of abused children.

The 1975 Oregon Legislative Assembly amended this statute, expanding the purpose of the reporting law to:

. . . preserve family life when consistent with the protection of the child by stabilizing the family and improving parental capacity [ORS 418.745].

This amendment conforms with the prevailing professional opinion (De Francis and Lucht, 1974; Sussman, 1974; 1975) that child abuse protection is best accomplished by a therapeutic, not a punitive approach.

Definition

The definitional elements of child abuse reporting legislation typically include: the legal meaning of child abuse, the age of children

covered by the law, and an enumeration of mandated reporters.

Child Abuse. States variously define what constitutes reportable child abuse according to the degree of specificity. While several states enumerate reportable injuries e.g. Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming, most states rely on language that describes physical abuse as nonaccidental injury. A majority of states have amended their child abuse reporting statutes to include sexual molestation and neglect. A minority of states have expanded the definition of abuse to include emotional abuse e.g. Alabama, California; abandonment e.g. Idaho, Vermont, Virginia; endangerment of morals e.g. Kansas, Louisiana; exploitation e.g. Louisiana; and drug addiction at birth e.g. Massachusetts. Five states have forgone any definition.

In general, the growing trend is toward enlargement of the definition of reportable abuse (Sussman, 1974; 1975) probably reflecting the professional consensus that child abuse is not restricted to physical injury alone (Maden and Wrench, 1977). A number of child abuse researchers maintain, however, that physical abuse, sexual molestation, and neglect are etiologically discrete phenomena (Maden and Wrench, 1977). Sussman (1974; 1975: 73) observes that these distinctions "could have a considerable impact on the treatment provided by an agency or ordered by the court, but whether the distinction should have any legal significance remains subject to debate."

While Oregon has continuously enlarged the definition of reportable abuse, to include "sexual molestation" and "neglect which leads to physical harm" [ORS 418.740 (1) (b) (c)], it has thus far resisted the advance of other states that include various forms of nonphysical maltreatment in their definitions of reportable abuse.

Age. A majority of the states now specify that children under the age of eighteen come under the scope of their respective reporting laws. All four states (Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, and Oregon) that had restricted the reportable age to twelve have amended their respective statutes to include all children under eighteen years old. There is professional consensus that all abused children under eighteen should be protected by the reporting statute to reflect the facts that: (1) a proportion of physical abuse victims are adolescents (Gil, 1970); (2) school teachers who come into contact with older, abused children are required to report in some jurisdictions (New York State Department of Social Services, 1973); and (3) sexual molestation is most frequently perpetrated against adolescent females (Maden and Wrench 1977) and must be reported in a majority of states.

Initially, Oregon had restricted abuse victims subject to report to age twelve. The legislature expanded the limitation to age fifteen in 1973 and now, like most states, the statute includes all unmarried minors [ORS 418.740(2)].

Reporters. Twenty-two states permit any person and all fifty states impose a duty on enumerated classes of individual to report when the reporter has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused. Almost every state requires medical personnel to report, although states vary considerable as to which other members of the community must also report. Sussman (1974; 1975:80) concludes that there is "an unmistakable legislative trend" toward "expanding the base of those required to report." This expansion of mandated reporters may be attributed to several factors:

1. While physicians are acknowledged to have the professional competence to detect nonaccidental injuries (McCoid, 1956; Paulsen, 1966), studies indicate that private physicians do not report them (Maden and Wrench, 1977).
2. Other sources who regularly come into contact with children are capable of identifying suspected abuse (Hansen, 1965; cf. Paulsen, 1966b; Helfer, 1968).
3. Sources which may recognize less serious cases of abuse have been reluctant to notify authorities (Grumet, 1970; Children's Bureau, 1976).

Presently, thirty-three states mandate school employees to report; thirty-two states include social workers; and fourteen states require law enforcement officials to report (Sussman, 1974; 1975). At least five states impose the duty to report on any individual (De Francis and Lucht, 1974). Sussman (1974; 1975: 80) states that "none of the states which expanded the base of required reporting is dissatisfied with the results."

In its original version, Oregon's child abuse reporting law exclusively designated licensed "practioners of any healing art" and institutional medical personnel as mandated reporters [Oregon Laws (1963), Chap. 621, Secs. 3,4]. The current statute [ORS 418.775] includes the following "public and private" officials who are required to report when they suspect that a child with whom they come into contact in their official capacity has been abused or an adult with whom they come into contact in their official capacity has abused a child [ORS 418.740(3)]:

1. Physician, including any intern or resident;
2. Dentist;
3. School employee;
4. Licensed practical nurse or registered nurse;

5. Employee of the Department of Human Resources, county health department, community mental health program, a county juvenile department, or a licensed child-caring agency;
6. Peace officer;
7. Psychologist;
8. Clergyman;
9. Social worker;
10. Optometrist;
11. Certified provider of day care, foster care, or an employee thereof;
12. Attorney.

Section Summary. In sum, the definitions in state child abuse reporting statutes establish the "who", "what", and "how" of legally reportable child abuse. There is a national trend toward enlarging these definitional elements of child abuse reporting legislation. This broadened base of reporting is primarily intended to identify child abuse by encouraging the widest reporting (De Francis and Lucht, 1974: 174). Recent experience in Florida indicates that expansive child abuse reporting legislation coupled with extensive statewide publicity of the law will product an extraordinary increase in the number of suspected abuse reports. Within one year, for instance, the number of reports in Florida jumped from 17 in 1970 to 19,120 in 1971. (Nagi, 1976). Of those investigated, however, only 56% proved to be valid cases of child abuse (Sussman and Cohen, 1975). Nagi (1976) calculates on the basis of the Florida data that to achieve confirmation of reported child abuse at the 90% level, 54% of the cases will be false positives. Light (1973) has raised serious constitutional and economic questions in view of the reporting pattern exemplified in Florida. On the one hand, significant proportions of false positive reports "invite the intolerable situation of falsely accusing large numbers of parents of abuse" (Light, 1973: 569). On the other hand, the lack of sufficient resources to treat large numbers of verified cases of abuse may render extensive reporting an unfortunate exercise in futility (Sussman and

Cohen, 1975).

Oregon has generally conformed to the national trend although it has refrained from expanding the legal definition of abuse to include nonphysical maltreatment. While accurate data on the actual incidence of child abuse do not exist (Cohen and Sussman, 1975; cf. Gelles, 1977), the nearly two-fold increase in the annual number of child abuse reports in Oregon (1975-1976) at least partially reflects broadening amendments to the child abuse reporting law enacted by the 1975 Oregon Legislative Assembly.

Authority and Responsibilities: Reporters

State child abuse legislation includes provisions that confer special authority with incentives and impose certain responsibilities with sanctions on reporters. These provisions are discussed immediately below.

Immunity. Every state grants immunity from prosecution to any individual who reports child abuse in good faith. Sussman (1974; 1975) indicates that child abuse authorities are in agreement over the necessity of an immunity provision though "even without a specific grant of immunity, good faith would probably be an absolute defense against such lawsuits" (Children's Bureau, 1976). Authorities, however, cite the benefit of the clause to "remove the fear of even the remote threat of liability and thereby provide a psychological impetus to report cases of suspected abuse" (Sussman, 1974; 1975: 99). In 1965 Oregon extended immunity from civil or criminal liability to any mandated reporter [ORS 418.762]. It should be noted that Oregon's immunity provision may not accord the same statutory protection to voluntary reporters.

Waiver of Privileged Communication. Many states have suspended privileged communications in cases of child abuse between doctors and patients and between husbands and wives, but, with one exception, preserve the privilege between attorneys and clients (De Francis and Lucht, 1974). Sussman (1974; 1975) reports that there is a consensus among authorities regarding the abrogation of privileged communication although the question of waiving the privilege in cases where a reporter has been working with an abusive family has been raised (Children's Bureau, 1976). Initially, Oregon [Oregon Laws (1965), Ch. 472, Sec. 6] waived privileged communication between husbands and wives and doctors and patients in judicial proceedings arising from a child abuse report. The current statute [ORS 418.775] extends that waiver to staff members of schools and nurses, but privileged communication is preserved between adults and psychiatrists, psychologists, clergymen, and attorneys [ORS 44.040], at least with respect to the duty to report [ORS 418.750].

Failure to Report. Slightly more than half the states impose the sanction of misdemeanor on mandated reporters who knowingly and willingly fail to report child abuse (Sussman, 1974; 1975). Even without this clause, mandated reporters who fail to carry out their duty are liable to civil prosecution. Although there is no known case of successful criminal prosecution (Sussman, 1974; 1975), many authorities favor penalty clauses on the grounds that:

1. Fine or imprisonment concretely reinforces the responsibility to report (Sussman, 1974; 1975; Children's Bureau, 1976).
2. Threat of punishment for failure to act serves as rationale for reporting when confronting hostile perpetrators (Sussman, 1974; 1975; Children's Bureau, 1976).

The Oregon legislature has seen fit to reduce the penalty for failure to report from a misdemeanor to a violation [ORS 418.990(7)].

Transmission of the Report. Nearly every state instructs reporters to immediately notify receiving agencies in the form of telephone communication followed by a written report. Sussman (1974; 1975) indicates that there is no professional disagreement about the immediate oral notification. Previous Oregon law had required an immediate oral report followed by a written report to the appropriate law enforcement agency containing specific information: names and addresses of the victim; parent or caretaker names and addresses; and, if known, the nature, explanation and previous history of the victim's injuries; and any other pertinent information [Oregon Laws (1971), Ch. 451, Sec. 4]. Only an oral report to designated agencies is now required by ORS 418.755.

Section Summary. In an effort to motivate child abuse reporting, legislatures have seen fit to: (1) remove the threat of liability to those who do report; (2) impose sanctions on those who do not report; and (3) expose most witnesses normally accorded the privilege of confidential communication; and (4) make notification both easy and rapid. If, however, the Silver et al. (1967) finding that one in four physicians interviewed refused to report despite legal protection is any indication, incentive devices, at least, may not be sufficient to motivate reporting.

Moreover, findings by Gil (1970) and Fergusson et al. (1972), for example, indicate that most reports of suspected abuse come from motivated relatives, neighbors, and friends not required to report anyway. In any event, state statutes vary somewhat according to the specific privileges, sanctions, and modes of communication, and professional

commentators will no doubt continue to debate the nuances of these provisions. It will become evident, however, that the most substantive disagreement surrounds the penultimate question of which agency should receive and investigate child abuse reports. The authority and responsibilities of recipient agencies are discussed in the following section.

Authority and Responsibilities: Receiving Agencies

State child abuse reporting statutes also authorize specific agencies to receive child abuse reports and delegate to them certain responsibilities over the disposition of those reported.

In what he terms the "most sensitive area of the whole discussion of reporting legislation," De Francis (1972:140) neatly summarizes the significance of the controversy surrounding agency involvement in reported child abuse.

A critical determination for the lawmakers is the decision about which resources to designate for receiving reports of child abuse. On this important decision rests the effectiveness of the reporting law with respect to achieving the appropriate goals. The right choice will bring into play the appropriate resources. A poor, or bad choice may produce results not contemplated by the law. It is possible, therefore, for the legislative intent to fail if the tools prescribed to accomplish the goal are inadequate or unsuited on the job.

State Legislation. Presently, thirty jurisdictions have designated two or more law enforcement and/or social welfare agencies to receive child abuse reports. Seventeen states delegate exclusive authority to social welfare agencies and only four jurisdictions including the District of Columbia reserve the authority to receive reports to law enforcement agencies only (TABLE I). Sussman (1974; 1975:93) observes

TABLE I

AGENCIES TO WHOM CHILD REPORTS ARE MADE^aN = 51 Jurisdictions

<u>Law Enforcement</u>	<u>Social Services</u>	<u>Law Enforcement and/or Social Services</u>	
Arizona	Arkansas ^b	Alabama	Montana
District of Columbia	Florida	Alaska	Nevada
Idaho	Hawaii	California	New Mexico
Nebraska	Kentucky	Colorado	Ohio
	Maine ^b	Connecticut	Oregon
	Massachusetts ^b	Delaware	Rhode Island
	Mississippi	Georgia	South Carolina
	Missouri	Illinois	South Dakota
	New Hampshire	Indiana	Tennessee
	New Jersey	Iowa	Texas
	New York ^b	Kansas	Utah
	North Carolina	Louisiana	Virginia
	North Dakota	Maryland	Washington
	Oklahoma	Michigan	West Virginia
	Pennsylvania ^b	Minnesota	Wisconsin
	Vermont		
	Wyoming		
<u>Totals</u>	4	17	30

^a Data extracted from Education Commission of the States, Child Abuse and Neglect in the States: A Digest of Critical Elements of Reporting and Central Registries, March, 1976.

^b States in which the coroner must be notified in cases of victim fatality.

"the trend toward reporting to welfare departments and away from police departments . . ." Of the fourteen states which exclusively authorized law enforcement agencies, Sussman reports that nine states currently designate social welfare departments as recipient agencies as well.

De Francis and Lucht (1974: 182) believe that "the situation is most confusing to a reporter in the states where he must choose between those [receiving agencies] named in the law." More importantly, both Paulsen (1967) and De Francis and Lucht (1974) contend that child abuse reports will be handled differently depending upon which agency the reporter elects to notify. De Francis and Lucht (1974: 192) speculate:

If the reporter is punitive-minded, would he be more likely to report to police or prosecutor? If the reporter is a social worker or a person seeking help for the abused child and his parents, would he be more likely to report to the protective services of the department or welfare?

Even if the reporter is unaware of different agencies' procedures and resources, De Francis and Lucht (1974) argue that unless a single agency is authorized to receive child abuse reports:

1. There is no assurance that each child abuse report will receive equal treatment within a jurisdiction.
2. With responsibility and accountability diffused among agencies, positive action on behalf of the victim and his family may be diluted.

Oregon Legislation. Oregon is one of those states that have authorized both law enforcement agencies - municipal police, county sheriffs, state police, and county juvenile departments - and a social welfare agency - the Children's Services Division of the State Department of Human Resources - to receive and investigate child abuse reports [ORS 418.755; 418.760(1)]. Oregon's original legislative scheme had uniquely delegated to the state medical investigators and coroners the authority

to receive and investigate child abuse reports [Oregon Laws (1913) Ch. 621, Secs. 3,4]. This authority was appended to the existing responsibility of medical examiners to investigate nonaccidental fatalities. In 1965, the Oregon legislature established a rudimentary central registry by instructing medical examiners to submit copies of child abuse reports to the State Chief Medical Investigation [Oregon Laws (1965), Ch. 472, Sec. 7]. The Chief Medical Investigator was authorized to make child abuse reports available to any local, state, and national law enforcement agency [Oregon Laws (1965), Ch. 472, Sec. 7].

Two years later, the State Public Welfare Commission was designated as an additional recipient agency for child abuse reports submitted by the medical examiners [Oregon Laws (1967), Ch. 545, Sec. 7]. This amendment represented the initial phase in developing social welfare agency responsibilities in child abuse reporting in Oregon. In 1971 the Legislative Assembly substantially modified the child abuse reporting scheme. Reporters were now instructed to notify appropriate law enforcement agencies upon reasonable suspicion of child abuse [Oregon Laws (1971), Ch. 451, Sec. 7]. The responsibility for investigating the reports, however, was bifurcated between law enforcement agencies and medical examiners [Oregon Laws (1971), Ch. 451, Sec. 5]. Law enforcement agencies were instructed to submit reports to the Central Registry [Oregon Laws (1971), Ch. 451, sec. 6]. The responsibility for maintaining the central registry was transferred to the newly created Children's Services Division of the State Department of Human Resources [Oregon Laws (1971), Ch. 451, sec. 6]. The Children's Services Division was authorized to make abuse reports available to physicians as well as law enforcement agencies [Oregon Laws (1971), Ch. 451, sec. 7]. The 1971 Oregon

Legislative Assembly instructed the Children's Services Division to prepare a report and submit possible recommendations about child abuse reporting to the next legislature.

In response, the Children's Services Division formed a twelve member statewide Protective Services Task Force to review proposed changes in the child abuse reporting law that had remained in committee during the 1973 legislative session. Senate Bill 65 [S.B. 65, Oregon Legislative Assembly, 1975 Regular Session], incorporating the recommendations of the Task Force, was submitted during the 1975 legislative session at the request of the Children's Services Division. The President of the Senate referred the bill to both the Human Resources and Judiciary Committees.

On February 4, 1975, the Senate Human Resources Committee received initial testimony on S.B. 65 at which time the matter of what agency should receive child abuse reports was discussed by Mr. Dave Elfstrand, a child protective services worker for the Children's Services Division appearing, however, as a private citizen. Elfstrand cited the American Humane Association's recommendation (De Francis and Lucht, 1974) that child reports should be made to the local child protective services agency [Minutes, Senate Human Resources Committee (SHRC), February 4, 1975, page 6]. Senator Walter Brown questioned the wisdom of substituting child protective services for police services in the case of serious injury. Elfstrand responded that a provision to authorize the intervention by the Children's Services Division in abuse cases would not preclude law enforcement agencies from becoming involved when the child is in jeopardy. Senator Ted Hallock concluded that Elfstrand's proposal would effectively remove child abuse as a prosecutable crime.

Elfstrand replied that under his proposal, child abuse would continue to constitute an assault under existing criminal law [Minutes, SHRC, February 4, 1975, page 7].

Testimony was continued before the Senate Human Resources Committee on March 11, 1975 at which time Mr. Joe Thimm presented the proposals recommended by the Task Force on behalf of the Children's Services Division. The recommendations of the Children's Services Division inter alia provided for the exclusive authorization of law enforcement agencies to receive and investigate child abuse reports ["Exhibit B", S.B. 65, SHRC (1975)]. Thimm commented that this proposal maintained police discretion to involve a medical investigator or the Children's Services Division following an investigation of a child abuse report. Senator Walter Brown raised the question of whether the proposal could interfere with a district attorney's ability to criminally prosecute perpetrators since law enforcement agencies were no longer required to notify other agencies. Mr. Bud Powell, representing the Children's Services Division, cited the traditional responsibility of police to report crimes to the District Attorney [Minutes, SHRC, March 11, 1975]. Ms. Adena Joy presented additional testimony on behalf of the League of Women's Voters of Oregon. She proposed inter alia an amendment to S. B. 65 that would authorize law enforcement agencies or the local office of the Children's Services Division to receive and investigate child abuse reports ["Exhibit F", S.B. 65, SHRC (1975)]. Citing De Francis and Lucht (1974) and the Education Commission of the States (1973), Joy declared that the criminalization of child abuse did not represent current recommended practice among child abuse authorities. She contended that most cases of child abuse required protective services, not criminal sanctions.

Current statistics were presented to show that in forty percent of the reported abuse cases in Multnomah County, children were removed from the home and placed in protective custody by law enforcement officers. Nearly one-third of those children were returned home the next day following a preliminary juvenile court hearing. She concluded that in order to facilitate the purpose of S.B. 65, Oregon should, like many other states, authorize a child protective services agency to receive and investigate child abuse reports [Minutes, HSRC, February 11, 1975]. The Senate Human Resources Committee amended S.B. 65 to incorporate the League's proposal relating to the receipt and investigation of child abuse reports and referred the bill to the Judiciary Committees [Minutes, SHRC, March 18, 1975].

The Senate Committee on the Judiciary (SCJ) considered S.B. 65 and heard testimony by Ms. Karen Pierson of the Children's Services Division relating to the receipt and investigation of reported child abuse. Pierson continued to support the original provision of S.B. 65 that granted discretionary authority to law enforcement agencies exclusively over the disposition of child abuse reports. In response to Senator Betty Browne's question about who would investigate reported child abuse under S.B. 65, Pierson stated that law enforcement agencies would have that responsibility. She noted, moreover, that the Senate Human Resources Committee had amended the bill to authorize the receipt and investigation of child abuse reports by the Children's Services Division as well, but that the Division's Task Force did not agree with that proposal. Pierson commented that current procedure for investigating child abuse reports often involved an interdependent relationship between and among police, juvenile departments, and the Children's Services

Division. Minor injury reports received by the police are referred to the Children's Services Division and in serious injury cases, the latter immediately notify the former. Senator Browne suggested statutory language which would grant law enforcement agencies discretionary authority to either investigate the report themselves or direct the Children's Services Division to investigate.

The bill was also deliberated in the House Judiciary Committee (HJC) which apparently did not consider the child abuse investigation issue. A Conference Committee was created to harmonize Senate and House versions of S.B. 65. The Legislative Assembly adopted statutory amendments which provided that:

1. Child abuse reports shall be received by the local office of the Children's Services Division or a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is at the time of his contact [ORS 418.775].
2. The Children's Services Division or the law enforcement agency shall immediately cause an investigation to be made to determine the nature and causes of the abuse of the child [ORS 418.760(1)].
3. If the law enforcement agency conducting the investigation finds reasonable cause to believe that abuse has occurred, the law enforcement agency shall notify the local office of the Children's Services Division within 24 hours of the receipt of the oral report [ORS 418.750(2)].

Senate Bill 65, Chapter 644, Oregon Laws (1975) was signed into law on June 4, 1975 and took legal effect on September 13, 1975.

Section Summary. States authorize one or more agencies to receive reports of suspected child abuse and delegate to them investigatory and other responsibilities pursuant to the purpose of child abuse reporting laws. Although the majority of states effectively create a choice of receiving and investigating agencies, professional commentators on this issue disagree with this practice. They contend that unless a single

agency is authorized to receive and investigate child abuse reports, it is questionable whether all cases will be handled equally and/or effectively in the same jurisdiction.

Ironically, Oregon recently amended its child abuse reporting law to authorize both law enforcement agencies and now the Children's Services Division to be recipient agencies. Interestingly enough, the latter agency opposed that amendment, but the Legislature was apparently persuaded that increasing the number of receiving and investigating agencies to include the Children's Services Division would better achieve the purposes of the child abuse reporting law.

REVIEW

This chapter has: (1) traced the development of the contemporary community response to the problem of child abuse; (2) summarized the current child abuse reporting legislation among the fifty states; (3) chronicled the development of Oregon's child abuse reporting law accompanied by a brief comparative analysis; and (4) identified the significant issues among professional commentators surrounding child abuse reporting legislation.

Several conclusions may be drawn from this presentation. Although child abuse has persisted throughout history, it is only quite recently been perceived as a community problem. In contrast, the community response to this problem, represented by the enactment of specific child abuse reporting legislation, has been unusually rapid. While states vary according to specific components of their respective child abuse reporting laws, most generally adhere to the recommendations of child abuse authorities to expand the base of reporting. Consequently, the

majority of states have broadened the definition of child abuse, increased the reportable age, and enlarged the number of mandated reporters. Correspondingly, these states have granted special protection, waived certain privileges, and imposed sanctions in order to motivate wide reporting of suspected child abuse. When states such as Florida and Oregon have broadened child abuse reporting laws, they have, in fact, generated more reports including, in the example of the former, a substantial proportion of false positives. Specific state agencies have been authorized by respective legislatures to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse. Despite professional opinion to the contrary, the majority of states including Oregon, have delegated these responsibilities to more than one agency.

Several child abuse authorities, however, argue that this arrangement will result in unequal and ineffective treatment of child abuse cases. The following chapter will examine the question of community intervention in response to the problem of child abuse.

CHAPTER III

COMMUNITY INTERVENTION IN THE PROBLEM OF CHILD ABUSE

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Whatever the intent of child abuse legislation, it "cannot be fulfilled until positive action is taken" (Sussman, 1974; 1975: 87). Child abuse commentators on the disposition of reported child abuse soon recognized that "what is actually done when a report is received is the all-important question . . . " (Paulsen, 1967). Sussman (1974; 1975: 87) succinctly states that: "The entire success of a reporting statute is contingent upon the nature of the agency charged with receiving the reports." Consequently, much of the significant controversy over how to implement an effective community response to the problem of child abuse relates to a fundamental disagreement about whether law enforcement or child protective service agencies should have responsibility over the disposition of reported child abuse (Young, 1964; Roberts, 1970). Operationally restated:

The manner in which problems of abuse are treated - punitively or curatively - is often thought to be a function of whether reports are received and investigated by law enforcement or social service agencies (Cohen, 1975: 140).

There is a growing research literature that provides pertinent observational and empirical data regarding this hypothesis (Sussman and Cohen, 1975). The succeeding sections will: (1) discuss the general question of what constitutes appropriate public involvement in the problem of child abuse; (2) present the rationale behind intervention by social

service and law enforcement agencies; and (3) provide evaluative data and analysis of the comparative performances of the respective agencies.

Nature of Community Intervention

Underlying the particular question of which agency should investigate reported child abuse is the larger question of what is the appropriate intervention for the problem of child abuse. In other words, what should be done is interrelated to who will do it. More specifically, "who is to take the lead in providing [what] services, once the abused child is brought to the attention of the community . . . " (Oviatt, 1972: 151). This question centers on two related issues: (1) the philosophy of social problems and (2) the pragmatics of community intervention.

The first issue is described by a punitive-therapeutic continuum (Nagi, 1976) which represents etiological theories of child abuse specifically, and social theories of responsibility and justice in general. With respect to the former, two theories occupy opposite positions on an etiological continuum. Sociologist David Gil's (1970; 1975) theory explains child abuse as a product of largely environmental factors including poverty, racism, and the so called "culture of violence." The psychodynamic theory of psychiatrists Steele and Pollock (1968) conceives child abuse as a product of intrapsychic conflict resulting from disordered and disturbed childhood experiences. These two opposing theories represent one case in the historical debate over individual versus social responsibility for the cause of behavior (Maden, 1967). The preponderant child abuse research data, however, sustain neither theory (Maden and Wrench, 1977). Helfer's (1973) conceptual framework

that describes child abuse as a result of interrelated psychological and social forces occupies the intermediate position on the etiological continuum although its theoretical formulation and empirical proof await undertaking (Maden, 1975).

What should be done in the case of child abuse may be related to etiological positions, but, in any event, preferences can be represented along a social action continuum of child abuse. In the earliest empirical study of whether and what public intervention in the problem of child abuse is preferred, Gil (1970) found that 27.1% of the national sample respondents ($N=1,511$) decided on punishment for the perpetrators, 66.4% favored family supervision and treatment, and 4.4% opted for no action unless the injury was serious. More specifically, 36.0% of the respondents stated that a victim should be immediately removed from the perpetrator; 53.9% felt that perpetrators should be offered help; and 8.0% said that no community action was required if subsequent injury was unlikely. In subsequent sample surveys (Cohen, 1975a; Nagi, 1976) of child abuse professionals, results indicated similar preferences with a direction toward intervention with a therapeutic mode. In sum, a majority do favor community action for the problem of child abuse and express a preference for supervision and treatment in contrast to criminal prosecution or custody.

Approaches to Community Intervention

The "popularity of the nonpunitive approach" to community intervention in reported child abuse is also evident among a majority of child abuse authorities who recommend that:

. . . reports of child abuse should not be made to the police or other law enforcement agencies, but to social agencies for the proper investigation and provision of services (Sussman, 1974; 1975: 113).

A minority persist, however, in advocating the continuing involvement of law enforcement agencies in the investigation of reported child abuse (Flammang, 1970). Following is an articulation of the respective rationale that emerge from a review of the child abuse literature.

Social Service Intervention. Generally speaking, child abuse authorities who argue for social service agency investigation of child abuse base their position on the conviction that violence against children is primarily a psychosocial, not a legal problem (De Francis and Lucht, 1974; Sussman, 1974; 1975). These authorities maintain that legal intervention will not ameliorate the psychological and sociological conditions that cause child abuse (Sussman, 1974; 1975). In particular, law enforcement agencies do not provide the diagnostic and treatment services that effectively protect victims against subsequent maltreatment (Reinhardt and Elmer, 1964; Hansen, 1965; Eads, 1969; Pitcher, 1972; Burt and Balyeat, 1974).

In addition, the threat of criminal prosecution and punishment discourages abusing families from seeking assistance or accepting services when they are offered. Obviously, perpetrators are unlikely to call law enforcement authorities whom they associate with crime, custody, and punishment (Paulsen, 1967). In particular, fear of prosecution may delay parents from seeking necessary medical treatment for the victim (Grumet, 1970). Helfer and Kempe (1968; 1974) contend that a criminal emphasis in child abuse cases also impedes effective therapy to abusing families. According to Sussman (1974; 1975) who cites more than a dozen authorities, this view represents the majority

opinion of child abuse experts (for example: Zalba, 1966; Brieland, 1966; Paulsen, 1967; Steele and Pollock, 1968; Terr and Watson, 1968; Grumet, 1970; Thomas, 1972; Johnson, 1974).

Moreover, abusing families who do become involved in the justice system will not be good candidates for rehabilitation or cooperative clients for social service agencies. First, a family is "very likely to feel accused and affronted simply because of being reported" to law enforcement agencies "who cast a premature criminal aura" even when the alleged abuse is determined to be unfounded (Reinhart and Elmer, 1964: 360, 361). Second, successful criminal conviction of child abusers is notably infrequent (Sussman, 1974; 1975). Witnesses for the prosecution - victims, co-perpetrators, and observers - are either incapable or unwilling to give incriminating testimony (Delaney, 1972). Defense attorneys or prosecutors may incapacitate the judicial process through procedural delays and appeals (Terr and Watson, 1968). Third, even in cases of conviction, punishment may not prevent subsequent abuse (Terr and Watson, 1968; Grumet, 1970) and in the event of incarceration, already problemated families may be deprived of an income-producing member and rendered unstable. Fourth, in juvenile court cases, child abuse victims may be viewed in the public's mind as being juvenile delinquents, not dependent children requiring the protection of the court; families are socially stigmatized when they are involved with the juvenile department (Eads, 1969). Fifth, even when child abuse is substantiated, victims may be unnecessarily removed from their homes (Kent, 1973). Last, where the prosecution fails to meet the burden of proof, exonerated perpetrators may feel their maltreatment of children is justified (Delaney, 1972).

Finally, potential reporters are more reluctant to report suspected child abuse to law enforcement than social service agencies. Some fear becoming involved in legal proceedings that might result (McCoid, 1956). Some dislike the "authoritative-punitive" approach they associate with law enforcement agencies (Weiner, quoted in Ladowitz, 1975: 4). As stated by De Francis (1972: 141), "reporting to law enforcement agencies gives little assurance that such reporting will, in fact, invoke the protective social services on behalf of the abused child."

Law Enforcement Agency Intervention. Those authorities who continue to advocate the involvement of law enforcement agencies generally cite the traditional police responsibility over acts of interpersonal violence. As stated by Swanson (1961: 44):

Police officers are responsible for the protection of life and property and for the preservation of peace in the community. Specifically, they investigate, apprehend, and bring to the attention of appropriate prosecuting officials persons who have been involved in criminal offenses, both felonies and misdemeanors.

More specifically, advocates reason that child abuse is a crime (Mussell, 1977) - misdemeanor, felony, or homicide - and police are the agency with the authority, knowledge, training and equipment to handle crimes (Collins, 1968).

First, law enforcement agencies have been delegated the legal authority from the community to protect individuals including children from intentional injury. In particular, the "police power" allows law enforcement agencies on reasonable grounds to enter homes to protect children from immediate danger and to search in order to collect evidence (Knapp 1961; Collins, 1968). Second, law enforcement officers are uniquely competent in investigatory technique and procedure to verify

an abuse complaint. Swanson (1961: 45) states that ". . . a proficient police investigation, based upon knowledge of the law and of the offenses governed by law, rules of evidence, and previous police experience in handling such complaints" is necessary to determine whether abuse has occurred. Police organizations have: (1) the manpower and mobility to carry out criminal investigations (Pitcher, 1972); (2) the training to elicit and document evidence from the interrogation of witnesses, photography of the injuries, and general observation (Swanson, 1961; Collins, 1968); and (3) the capability to subject physical evidence to laboratory tests and analysis (Collins, 1968). Third, law enforcement agencies regularly detect child abuse during routine patrol or in response to domestic altercations and other related criminal activity (Knapp, 1961; Johnson, 1976). Moreover, in all communities police organizations provide continuous twenty-four hour service (Swanson, 1961; Collins, 1968). They are the agency to which "people are accustomed to reporting cases of physical violence . . . and they would doubtlessly consider it incongruous to report serious offenses involving children to an agency other than the police " (Collins, 1968: 207).

Although these child abuse commentators emphasize pragmatic grounds for involving law enforcement agencies in reported child abuse, other reasons have been articulated. As Flammang (1970: 195) points out:

. . . the police cannot be primarily concerned with the causation of the crime being investigated. The police function is to determine whether a crime has been committed and to identify the perpetrator. The ultimate goal of investigation is to discover the truth.

Yet, observes Kempe (1968: 170), a social worker:

. . . may be called upon to investigate a case and in doing so appear to be concerned primarily with fact gathering. In this area, she may appear to be working in a way similar to that of a police department or sheriff's office in gathering incriminating information from all sources, including the parents themselves. At the same time she may be called upon, however, to fill a therapeutic role and may need to establish and maintain a relationship with the family that will permit some way of improving the serious psychologic disturbances within the family.

On the one hand, this role conflict described by Kempe may effectively result in mandatory intervention by a social service agency without the legal adjudication to which an alleged perpetrator is entitled (Polier cited in Paulsen, 1967). On the other hand, some authorities believe that legal coercion following due process is effective in protecting children from subsequent abuse (Boardman cited in Paulsen, 1967; Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Department cited in Eads, 1969; Flammang, 1970; Pitcher, 1972).

Section Summary. Two approaches to the problem of child abuse have currency among child abuse authorities. These approaches may be grounded on differing philosophies regarding the etiology of social problems and the theory of social justice in addition to pragmatic, operational considerations. Professional advocates of the prevailing social service approach believe that child abuse results from environmental stresses that may be effectively ameliorated through social services generally, and therapy in particular. Defenders of the law enforcement approach may subscribe to the theory of individual responsibility and perceive child abuse, therefore, as principally a product of intraphysic forces. Clearly, these authorities emphasize the capabilities of law enforcement agencies to respond to, investigate, and determine the veracity of a report of suspected abuse. At least some of these authorities also believe that child abuse is most effectively prevented

through legal coercion. In any event, the commentary discloses distinctly different perceptions of agency roles in the problem of child abuse between social service and law enforcement advocates.

Performance of Community Intervention

Some empirical data emerge from a review of the child abuse research literature to substantiate professional opinion about agency involvement in reported child abuse. Descriptive and comparative study findings can be related to: (1) agency capacity to identify suspected cases of child abuse; (2) agency effectiveness in determining the validity of reported child abuse; and (3) agency performance in the disposition of valid abuse cases.

Agency Identification. Gil (1968: 851) speculated that the "legally reported incidents of child abuse may constitute only a part of that total universe of child abuse incidents." In fact, while the most current estimate of the number of valid child abuse reports (Sussman and Cohen, 1975) yielded a national projection of 41, 105 annual cases, a recently completed national probability survey sample (Gelles, 1977) determined that between 1.2 and 1.7 million children had been physically abused in 1975. In other words, public authorities come in contact with only the tip of the so called "child abuse iceberg" (Cohen 1975a; 1975b; Nagi, 1976).

Moreover, the data show that child abuse is differentially reported among the population according to the sex and age of the victim and the race and socioeconomic status of his family (Maden and Wrench, 1977). Specifically, more males than females are reported (Gil, 1970; Johnson, 1974), although females outnumbered males in the adolescent age groups

(Gil, 1970; Fergusson, et al., 1972; Johnson, 1974). Surveys uniformly find that there are a disproportionate number of poor and nonwhite families among reported cases of child abuse (Simons et al., 1966; Gil, 1970; Thomson et al., 1971; Fergusson et al., 1972; Johnson, 1974). It is important to note that the few clinical studies which compared socio-economic characteristics of the child abuse victims and their families with the population served by the hospitals in which these studies were conducted found no significant differences (Maden, 1975). This finding suggests that differentially reported child abuse may be related to the reporting source. Interestingly enough, Nagi (1976) discovered that in the caseload of child maltreatment reported or referred to child protective agencies (N not ascertained), 27.0% were considered cases of abuses as opposed to neglect (76%). In contrast, cases of abuse constituted 46.6% of their caseload according to police and sheriffs.

At the very least, different sources report different proportions of suspected child abuse. Gil's (1968) nationwide sample study (N= 1,380) showed that 36.0% of those initially seeking assistance were members of the victim's household other than the perpetrator; 29.9% were relatives or friends; 24.3% were the perpetrators; and 16.3% were schools. Fergusson et al., 1972 found similarly that 41.6% of the persons (N=144) obtaining medical attention were parents or relatives; 29.8% were child welfare workers; 6.9% were police officers; and 2.7% were school officials. Johnson (1974), however obtained different results, although: (1) her study did not distinguish between and among persons who initially reported, agencies that received the report, and officials who filed the report in the central registry and (2) she disaggregated the data according to the following categories. Of the 1,159 study cases:

1. School and child care personnel reported 17.3%.
2. Members of the victim's household excluding perpetrators reported 16.6%.
3. Relatives reported 11.6%.
4. Neighbors and concerned citizens reported 16.6%.
5. Physicians and hospital personnel reported 11.6%.
6. Law enforcement officers reported 7.3%.
7. Suspected perpetrators reported 5.1%.
8. Others and unknowns accounted for 14.5%.

Although Johnson explained the highest reporting rate among school and child care personnel by greater general public awareness of the child abuse problem and a greater index of suspicion among those agencies in particular, aggregating categories 2, 3, and 4 above produce results that confirm De Francis and Lucht's (1974:10) conclusion that the "larger proportion of reports come from relatives, neighbors, and other nonprofessional sources."

Several of these findings bear on the instant question of the respective capacity of law enforcement and social service agencies to identify suspected child abuse. On the preliminary issue of detection, the data clearly show that neither agency actually discovers a significant proportion of child abuse. In fact, the Gil (1970) and Johnson (1974) surveys both show that medical personnel, predominantly in hospitals and clinics, are most likely to diagnose injuries as suspected child abuse. On the primary matter of identification, Johnson's (1974) data imply that when child abuse is reported, social service agencies are more likely to receive notification. In Johnson's (1974) study, 71.3% of the cases having initial contact with official sources

(N = 1148) were received by a public social agency compared with 19.3% (range: 5.7 - 30.0%) by law enforcement agencies (courts and police). It should be noted, however, that some states in the survey do not designate law enforcement agencies as official report recipients which accounts for the wide range. In those states in which law enforcement agencies are alternative official recipients of child abuse complaints, Johnson (1974: 54) notes "the highest percentages to this source were observed. . . ." The relatively small percentage of reporting perpetrators (5.1%) suggest that fear of legal involvement discourages contact with law enforcement agencies. This may explain the proportionally small number of complaints to law enforcement agencies (7.3%) compared with Gil's (1968) earlier finding (29.4%). Since most states have now offered reporters a choice of receiving agencies, it may indicate that the proportionally decreasing reception of child abuse reports by law enforcement agencies reflects a preference to report suspected abuse to social service agencies when the choice is available and publicized.

Nagi's (1976) recent survey of 1,696 professionals representing 1,760 nationwide agencies involved in child abuse provides some detailed data on the relationship between reporting sources and receiving agencies. The study determined the sources from which law enforcement and child protective services agencies, among others, received child abuse reports. Both agencies received the largest proportion of reports (N not presented) from relatives, friends, and neighbors. However, 48.6% of all the reports received by police organizations came from that source compared with 31.1% of the reports received by child protective services. However, child protective service agencies received a greater percentage of reports in their caseload from the next proportionally larger sources of reports;

respectively, welfare departments, schools, and hospitals and clinics. Neither agency received any substantial proportion of suspected child abuse reports from physicians, psychologists, clergymen, and other professionals. In fact, studies have uniformly found that private physicians infrequently report cases of child abuse. (Sussman, 1974; 1975). In a survey of pediatricians in San Francisco, Ladowitz (1975) discovered that among several notable reasons why physicians expressed hesitancy to report, 15% of the (N=57) respondents specifically expressed a dislike of a police approach; 25% (N=17) recalled a negative experience in dealing with police organizations for reported child abuse. While the greatest percentage of physicians fail to report because they do not consider an abuse diagnosis when they treat an injured child or do not want to involve public authorities (Silver et al., 1967), the evidence suggests contact with law enforcement agencies exacerbates their reluctance to report suspected child abuse (Garcia and Garrison, 1975). In fact, from interviews conducted with professionals involved in the field of child abuse, Cohen (1975b: 160) determined that:

Where reporters had a choice among police, health and welfare departments, such as in California, they often preferred the non-law enforcement agency and resorted to police only in emergencies or after other avenues had been exhausted.

Taking these findings together, the data support the more precise conclusion that while social service agencies are more likely to be notified in the case of suspected abuse, they are the agency of choice for other agencies whereas law enforcement agencies continue to receive the largest proportion of their reports from individuals in the community. This conclusion gives more credence to the assertion that law enforcement agencies are more likely to attract community reports of suspected child abuse.

Agency Investigation. Agency gatekeeping, as conceived by Gelles (1975), includes the screening and investigatory procedures organizations use to diagnose reported cases of suspected child abuse. Obviously, physical evidence of injury is the primary determinant used by all agencies to confirm reports of suspected child abuse (Terr and Watson, 1968; Nagi, 1976). Johnson (1974) found that abuse was confirmed in 74.3% of the cases of children appearing with bruises or welts ($N=835$); 81.8% with abrasions, contusions or lacerations ($N=269$) and 68.8% with bone fractures ($N=109$) compared with 24.5% of the cases ($N=94$) in which no physical injury was apparent. That study also reported a statistically significant relationship (.001 level) between seriousness of injury and confirmation of suspected abuse. Less obviously, significant relationships between case confirmation and, among other factors, the victim's sex, race, and family socioeconomic status were established in the Johnson (1974) study. These data indicate the agency determination of the case status of suspected abuse reports is subject to bias (Light, 1973; Sussman, 1974; 1975; Nagi, 1976).

Moreover, agency personnel differ about what constitutes child abuse and how to operationalize its definition. Nagi (1975: 16) reported that, for example, 56% of law enforcement agency respondents ($N = 288$) and 64% of child protective service workers ($N = 129$) agreed with the statement: "It is difficult to say what is and what is not child mistreatment."

In an informal survey of workers in the field of child abuse, Gelles (1975) reveals that different agencies employ selective biases in verifying suspected child abuse reports. For example, social workers associated

child abusing families with households that smelled of urine and feces, had no set mealtime, and permitted the children to go about inadequately clothed. Medical personnel determined the existence of child abuse on the basis of abnormal perinatal history and postnatal development of the victim and his siblings. Educators relied on accounts of abuse offered by the children themselves. Nagi's (1975) comparison among hospitals, schools, and police likewise indicates differences in the types of evidence of abuse pursued by the respective agencies. In sum, the gate-keeping devices employed by different agencies may result in different case status determinations following an investigation of suspected child abuse reports.

In fact, the available data indicate that law enforcement and social service agencies vary in the performance of suspected child abuse investigations (Nagi, 1976). Law enforcement agencies ($N = 290$) in over 85% of the jurisdictions responded to a child abuse complaint with a home visit within a day (96% for an emergency within hours) whereas in only 54.4% of the jurisdictions did child protective services agencies ($N = 130$) make the same response (Nagi, 1976). It should be noted that in only 32.1% of the jurisdictions did the latter maintain twenty-four hour coverage. In her study, Johnson (1974: 135) determined that "the less time between contact and assistance, the more likely injuries were confirmed as abuse." Moreover, that same study established that more cases of suspected abuse were confirmed (77.4%) when report and/or referral were made to law enforcement agencies ($N = 155$) than when ($N = 819$) were reported to social agencies (65.1% confirmed). A substantially larger proportion of reports received by social service agencies (22.5%) resulted in a determination of uncertainty about whether

abuse had occurred compared with police and sheriff departments (13.4%). In general, Johnson (1974) concluded that the states which defined abuse in terms of physical injury only, and in which law enforcement agencies have investigatory responsibility, confirmed more cases of suspected abuse.

In sum, these data support the contention that law enforcement agencies more effectively investigate suspected abuse reports as measured by response time from complaint to contact, certainly of case status and the proportion of confirmed reports following an investigation. These data, however, do not provide an explanation for the difference in investigatory performance between social service and law enforcement agencies. For example, it may be true that the former are less skillful in ascertaining pertinent evidence (Besharov, 1974) or that the latter receive reports of greater severity and which, therefore, are more readily confirmed (Johnson, 1974). What happens to cases confirmed by the respective agencies is discussed immediately below.

Agency Disposition. While authorities disagree about who should decide what happens to child abuse cases (e.g. Swanson, 1961; Kempe, 1968; Besharov, 1974; De Francis and Lucht, 1974; Cohen, 1975a), it is generally agreed that the destiny of a case is determined by which agency, law enforcement or social services, intervenes (Sussman and Cohen, 1975). Disposition is properly conceived in three temporal phases: (1) immediate response to protect abuse victims; (2) subsequent actions to prevent further abuse; and (3) final outcome of the case.

The immediate response to protect abuse victims effectively translates into a decision to place the children in protective custody i.e. remove them from a home in which they are endangered. Sussman (1974; 1975) finds that only six states specifically include protective custody

provisions in their child abuse reporting laws although there is general statutory authority granted to law enforcement and other agencies to take protective custody when necessary. In Oregon, for example, both law enforcement agencies and the Children's Services Division are empowered to remove children in imminent danger, although the latter is not statutorily protected from civil liability [ORS 419.517 (2)]. Sussman (1974; 1975) reports that experts dispute the necessity of protective custody. Nagi's (1976) survey determined that 25% of the child care agencies (N not presented) removed children representing at least half their caseload. Johnson and Morse's (1968) early follow-up study of abuse victims discovered that fully 75% (N = 83) of those children were at least temporarily removed from their homes. Unfortunately, there are no available data that relate rate of protective custody to agency involvement. Consequently, the assertion that law enforcement agencies are more prone to remove children subject to abuse from their homes is neither supported or rejected by the research data.

Community agency actions to prevent subsequent child abuse can be classified in three categories according to recipient: (1) victims, (2) their parents, and (3) perpetrators; and dichotomized according to legal or non-legal dispositions (FIGURE 1).

Legal action on behalf of the victims generally involves adjudication in juvenile court. The adjudication process is initiated with the filing of a dependency petition alleging that the subject has been subjected to abuse and requires the legal protection of the court. Since most juvenile courts operate without strict criminal court rules and

A. Legal

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Forum</u>	<u>Dispositions</u>
Victims	Juvenile Court	Wardship
		Wardship and Placement
		Permanent Adoption
Parents	Juvenile Court	Suspension of Legal Custody
		Suspension of Physical Custody
		Termination of Parental Rights
		Mandated Services
Perpetrators	Criminal Court	Fine
		Imprisonment
		Mandated Actions

B. Non-legal

Victims	Social Service	Direct Services
	Agencies	Referrals for Service
Families	Social Service	Direct Services
	Agencies	Referral for Services
		Voluntary Placement
Perpetrators	Social Service	Direct Services
	Agencies	Referral for Services

Figure 1. Legal and non-legal dispositions of reported child abuse.

procedures, the judge must decide on the basis of the testimony presented whether the preponderance of evidence indicates that the alleged abuse did occur. As Goodpaster and Angel (1975) observe, the juvenile court has considerable discretion in making a disposition upon a finding of abuse. The court may decide to remove legal custody from parents. Additionally, the court can order that victims be placed away from their homes. A subsequent court hearing may determine the need to terminate parental rights at which time victims are permanently removed from their homes.

Correspondingly, juvenile courts may effectively order the parents of abused children to obtain assistance e.g. counseling when the court assumes wardship. Additionally, the court can order parents to relinquish physical custody of children who are wards of the court. A subsequent court hearing may result in the termination of all parental rights.

Several studies indicate that the extent of juvenile court involvement in child abuse cases varies dramatically according to jurisdiction. For example, in New York City, 10% of the abuse cases (N not presented) were referred to the Family Court (Polier and MacDonald, 1972); in Washington, D.C., 17.3% of the cases (N = 34) were heard in the Juvenile Court (Silver et al., 1971); and in St. Louis, petitions were filed in 39.6% of the cases (N = 116) according to Theisen (1972). This variation probably reflects statutory as well as community attitude differences among the respective jurisdictions. Although petition for wardship does not automatically connote removal from the home, court custody is another common index of legal involvement in child abuse cases. Again, studies indicate that different community standards produce varying rates of

wardship in child abuse cases among the respective jurisdictions. For example, in St. Louis 36.2% of the children ($N = 116$) reported to public authorities were made wards (Theisen, 1972); in New York City, 2.5% of the cases (N not presented) resulted in wardship (Polier and MacDonald, 1972); and in Portland, 24% of the abuse cases treated at the public hospital ($N = 33$) became wards of the court (Anders and Burton, 1972). The last study noted a annually decreasing trend in the number of wardships in their sample population (cf. Matusak, 1971). Unfortunately, there are no available data that relate rate of wardship to agency involvement. Nagi (1976), however, reports that child protective service agencies were somewhat more successful in obtaining favorable court action petitions they filed than were the law enforcement agencies. Placement outside the home is a likely, but by no means unique disposition subsequent to wardship. Studies indicate varying placement rates probably reflecting the proportion of wardships and thus the differences in community standards among jurisdictions. In Denver, 65.5% of the sample ($N = 58$) in the Martin *et al.* (1974) follow-up studies were in foster care; in Massachusetts, 27% of the children ($N = 115$) in the Bryant study cited by Zalba (1966) were placed outside the home; and in St. Louis, 32.6% of the children ($N = 116$) reported to public authorities were placed in foster care. In his national sample survey, Gil (1970) determined that 35% of all the children reported for abuse ($N = 1,380$) were removed from the home. Slightly more than half the respondents ($N = 1,696$) in Nagi's (1976) survey of child abuse professionals reported that wardship resulted in, at least, the victim's temporary removal from parental custody. In Great Britain, the Skinner and Castle (1969) retrospective study discovered that 47.5% of the victims ($N = 78$) were living away from their

homes. While there is no available data that relate and compare rate of placement with law enforcement and child protective services agencies' involvement, Nagi's (1976) survey of the latter organizations ($N = 130$) indicates that 54.0% of those agency respondents found victim's separation from the family advisable in only one quarter of their caseload. This finding, when compared with higher placement rates in most of the jurisdictions discussed above suggests that trained social workers are more likely to recommend treatment other than some kind of foster care (Shinn cited in Roberts, 1970). It should be noted that two follow-up studies (Kent, 1973; Martin et al., 1974) on the functioning of abused victims find that these children, even when removed from their homes, continue to display some neurological and substantial psychosocial dysfunction. Kent (1973) specifically questions the short term benefit of insured protection in foster care compared with long term psychological costs involved in separating children from their families.

Legal action against perpetrators involves prosecution under criminal statutes for physical or sexual assault. Like all criminal prosecution, the court must convict only when the evidence indicates that, beyond a reasonable doubt, the perpetrator has committed the alleged abuse. Because of this stricter legal test for criminal conviction, studies indicate that a relatively small proportion of alleged perpetrators are prosecuted for acts of child abuse. They are not frequently convicted and rarely incarcerated. Gil's nationwide survey ($N = 1,380$) determined that 17.3% of the suspected perpetrators were indicted; 13.1% were convicted, and 7.2% actually served prison sentences. Sturgess and Heal's (1976) survey in Great Britain reported a comparably higher conviction rate among the perpetrators ($N = 224$) charged with cruelty to children

but a comparably low rate of incarceration (10.1%) among those found guilty ($N = 138$). It is interesting to note that of the fourteen imprisonments, only one was a female perpetrator. Sturgess and Heal (1976) also present some limited data on services provided to perpetrators subsequent to adjudication. Probationary supervision was ordered for 46.8% of the perpetrators, 26.7% received no services, 3.6% accepted "after care," and less than 2.0% were provided with family or marriage support services.

Non-legal dispositions of reported child abuse are typically associated with actions to preserve the family unit and to bring abuse victims and their families under some form of treatment. Parents, however, may be encouraged to voluntarily place their children who have been abused although, as Mnookin quoted in Schuchter (1976: 7) accurately observes:

These voluntary placements are not always truly voluntary. A substantial degree of state coercion may be involved, as when state welfare departments give parents the option of giving up their children voluntarily rather than facing court process (my emphasis).

Treatment to child abuse victims and their families is rendered in a variety of approaches (Parke and Collmer, 1975). For example, Gil's (1970) survey found that in 71.5% of the cases ($N = 1,380$), the victim received some kind of medical treatment; counseling services were made available to 71.9% of their families; and 2.2% of them received homemaking services. Although Steele and Pollock (1968) report considerable success in treating abusing families, numerous authors indicate a general failure to prevent subsequent abuse despite various forms of community intervention (Sussman, 1975).

The limited data on the outcome of child abuse dispositions indicate that, on the one hand, children placed in foster care are likely to remain separated from their families, but, on the other hand, a sizeable proportion of the children remaining in their homes are subjected to further abuse. Nagi's (1976) nationwide survey of child abuse professionals determined that of the cases (83.8%) known to the respondents ($N = 1,696$), 23.3% reported that their cases resulted in a termination of parental custody i.e. adoption, institutionalization, or long term foster placement of the victim. Castle and Kerr's (1972) follow-up of the children ($N = 78$) originally studied by Skinner and Castle (1969) found that 36% of the fostered children ($N = 31$) remained separated from their families. Skinner and Castle's (1969) initial study had followed the subsequent progress of the children in their sample. Since 48.7% of the sample ($N = 78$) were in protective placements or had died, the available followup sample was reduced to forty. Of that number, 60% of the children were reinjured despite the fact that thirty-one of their families were under the supervision of social workers. Three years later, Castle and Kerr (1972) still found that 14.5% of their sample ($N = 62$) were subjected to abuse. Similarly, Silver et al. (1971) reported that 44.4% of the families ($N = 18$) referred to child protective services reabused their children and the Juvenile Court subsequently removed the victims. Those authors (Silver et al., 1971: 171) concluded: "It appears that the only intervention that successfully prevented further episodes of abuse or neglect was the removal of the child by the court." Although there is no available data that specifically relates outcome to agency involvement, the data indicate that "the formal policies of social agencies in this field [of child abuse] are sanguine to the point

of being fatuous regarding the potentiality for change in a large proportion of the parents involved."

Subchapter Summary. The data substantiate the conclusion that law enforcement and social service agencies attract reports of suspected child abuse from different sources and investigate these reports with varying degrees of effectiveness as measured by the case status determinations. More specifically, the former agency receives a larger proportion of reports from lay persons in the community whereas the latter appears to be the growing agency of choice for professionals involved in child abuse. Several factors may contribute to this distribution. Evidently, lay persons unaware of or unable to contact social service agencies will notify law enforcement agencies traditionally responsible for receiving community complaints of interpersonal violence. Conversely, professionals connected with the social welfare agency network, particularly child care organizational personnel, will notify the network child protective services agency except in cases of emergency. Assuming, for the moment, a public educated to a choice between recipient agencies in most states, this unequal distribution of reporting sources may also reflect different perceptions - real or imagined - about the attitudes, procedures, and performance of the respective receiving and investigating agencies. With respect to performance, at least, the data indicate that law enforcement investigations are more likely to confirm and less likely to remain uncertain about suspected abuse reports than investigations performed by social service agency counterparts. Several factors may contribute

to this difference in performance. On the one hand, resources and capabilities of trained law enforcement officers may produce more thorough investigations. On the other hand, the circumstances surrounding a suspected abuse may be more ambiguous in reports sent to social service agencies. Alternatively, differing perceptions about child abuse between the respective agencies may significantly influence investigatory performances.⁴

In any case, the available research data do not permit a conclusion about the question of whether there is a difference in child abuse case disposition according to agency disposition maker. The data suggest that social service agencies are less inclined to seek removal of a victim from his home, although the risk of subsequent abuse is not unlikely. Moreover, while the majority of abusing families receive some kind of social services, the treatment prognosis is not optimistic. Finally, most perpetrators are not criminally prosecuted nor do they receive social services. Whatever the mode of public intervention in cases of child abuse, the outcome does not appear to be positive. Although placing child abuse victims in foster care most effectively prevents subsequent reinjury, the long term effects of family separation may also be harmful.

INTERORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Self-evidently, complex organizations such as law enforcement and social service agencies are comprised of individuals and it is they who

⁴See Interorganizational Context, below

perform the activities that constitute agency action. According to Katz and Kahn (1966: 37) bureaucracies indoctrinate their members in order to achieve "the formal patterns of behavior" which establish organizational performance. These authors offer that organizational behavior is a product of rules, norms, and values. Katz and Kahn (1966, 37) define these components as follows:

. . . roles are standardized patterns of behavior required of all persons playing a part in a given functional relationship, regardless of personal wishes or interpersonal obligations irrelevant to the functional relationship. Norms are the general expectations of a demand character for all role incumbents of a system or subsystem. Values are the more generalized ideological justifications and aspirations (my emphasis).

Given that law enforcement and social service agencies appear to perform differently in response to reports of suspected child abuse, the attitudes and opinions expressed by personnel from the respective agencies presumably reflect the roles, norms, and values which may determine agency performance. A substantial amount of comparative data regarding perceptions of child abuse, expectations about public intervention in suspected cases of abuse, and judgments about agency performance from law enforcement and social service personnel have been collected (Tocchio, 1967; Roberts, 1970; Cohen, 1970a; Nagi, 1976). Following is an analysis of that data as they relate to agency disposition of reported child abuse, prefaced by data about some relevant personal characteristics of agency members.

Personal Characteristics

Nagi (1976) provides comparative data on selected attributes of law enforcement and child protective services agency personnel interviewed in that survey. The profile that emerges for the average child protective services worker (CPS) compared with her police or sheriff

counterpart (POL) is a younger female, less likely to be married or have children, longer educated but shorter tenured in the agency. Specifically, 61.6% of CPS ($N = 129$) ranged between twenty-five to forty-four years of age whereas 64.3% of POL ($N = 288$) were between thirty-five and fifty-four years old. More than half (55.3%) the CPS were female but 81.6% of the POL were male. Better than 90% of both agencies were white. Only 69.8% of CPS were married and 36.6% did not have children. More than half the CPS (57.4%) obtained graduate and professional degrees compared with only 7.9% of the POL. It should be noted that 32.5% of the POL but only 2.3% of the CPS had never attended a conference or workshop on child abuse. Three-fourths of the POL (76.0%) had been with their agency for more than five years compared with 49.0% of the CPS. In sum, the profile of the POL is an older, white male, married and with children, not having graduated from college and having been a law enforcement officer more than five years. These data may lend some perspective to the attitudes and opinions expressed by respondents from the respective agencies as presented below.

Perceptions of Child Abuse

Whatever the extent to which perceptions about child abuse are related to personal characteristics of respective agency members, (Nagi, 1976), the data indicate that law enforcement officers and social service agency personnel perceive some aspects of the child abuse problem differently. On the broad question of the balance between the rights of parents and children, 76.7% of the CPS compared with 65.4% of the POL in Nagi's (1976: 39) survey felt that "the rights of children had been neglected in favor of parental rights" and that "too many children

had been mistreated in the name of discipline." On the question of what constitutes child abuse, 55.7% of the POL compared with 43.5% of the CPS found it difficult to render a decision. A large majority of both CPS (96.6%) and POL (92.5%) support public intervention for problems between parents and children. These data suggest that social service agency personnel have a more encompassing view of child abuse than their law enforcement counterparts, which may help explain the finding that 45.0% of the CPS compared to 30.6% of the POL believe that a "great deal" of child abuse goes under-reported (Nagi, 1976: 158).

Expectations

Although both agencies concur in the public's involvement in child abuse cases, (Cohen, 1975a) the data indicate that respective personnel differ about the nature and effectiveness of that intervention. In response to general questions regarding the current capacity to diagnose and treat the child abuse problem, the POL were somewhat less optimistic (41.3%) than the CPS (57.4%). More specifically, 91.8% of the CPS, but only 76.2% of the POL favored a therapeutic rather than a punitive approach in dealing with child abuse. This difference in approach may, in part, be explained by respectively different expectations about the effectiveness of child protective services in general and group therapy for abusing parents in particular. Whereas 32.5% of the CPS calculated that more than half their child abuse caseload was reinjured, 55.2% police and hospital personnel estimated that at least half of those CPS cases came to their attention because of continued abuse. Despite the incidence of abuse subsequent to CPS intervention, 95.6% of the CPS felt that "Parents Anonymous" and other "self help" groups were effective, but a smaller

proportion of one law enforcement agency, juvenile and family courts, were so enthusiastic (76.3%). In contrast, Tocchio's (1967) earlier survey of Californian agency personnel involved in child abuse ($N = 111$) determined that three-fourths of the law enforcement group, but less than half the public welfare respondents preferred to report child abuse to both juvenile and criminal courts. More than half the former, but only 28% of the latter expressed complete satisfaction with the results of the referral process. Cohen's (1975a) recent nationwide sample survey of child abuse professionals similarly found that 38% of the police ($N = 204$) felt that perpetrators of child abuse should be jailed or punished. In sum, these data show that social service agency personnel prefer to maintain a therapeutic approach to the problem of child abuse while law enforcement personnel express substantially less optimism over that approach and a comparably larger proportion continue to favor a punitive approach.

Judgments

Given the apparent difference between law enforcement and social service agency personnel in the approach to the child abuse problem, it follows that the data indicate that the respective agencies have differing judgments about their respective roles in responding to child abuse in the community. The core issue is which agency should have what responsibility in the community disposition of reported child abuse. Restated according to Warren's (quoted in Nagi, 1976: 32) conceptualization of organizational domain, what is each "organization's focus in the inter-organizational network, including its legitimized 'right' to operate in specific geographic and functional areas. . . ?" Following a functional analysis, the disposition of suspected child abuse reports divides into

the processes of identifying and treating valid cases. As a way of determining the extent of perceived conflict produced when agency personnel perform both identification and treatment functions, Nagi (1976: 30) asked his survey subjects to respond to this statement: "Physicians who are known to report cases of mistreatment of children lose the confidence of their patients." Whereas both child protective services (22.9%) and hospital based social services personnel (26.2%) perceived the least amount of role conflict compared with police (32.8%) and hospital medical personnel themselves (30.4%). Not surprisingly, in Cohen's (1975a) survey more than three-fourths of the local social service agency respondents preferred their own agency to receive and investigate suspected child abuse. For the majority of police respondents, they were the agency of choice to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse. This difference in perceived agency role is reflected by Nagi's (1976: 151, 152) finding that 28.6% of the CPS were "hardly ever" likely to report suspected child abuse to the POL, although 74.4% of the POL were "almost always" or "often" likely to report suspected abuse to the CPS. This apparent tendency for POL to be more cooperative with CPS and not vice versa is substantiated by findings that 68.3% of the POL compared with 58.2% of the CPS feel that the conflict between punitive and therapeutic approaches is reconcilable (Nagi, 1976: 40) and that 44.9% of the CPS, but only 22.2% of the POL problems caused by other agencies were POL and CPS counterparts respectively (Nagi, 1976: 186). In rating effectiveness of their respective agencies and the performance of other organizations in the child abuse domain, 56% of the POL compared with 39% of CPS gave themselves high marks. "Police were most generous in their assessment of the effectiveness of other agencies in the community"

(Nagi, 1975: 17).

Subchapter Summary

These data show that law enforcement and social service agency personnel do have different perceptions about their roles in the problem of child abuse, operate with different degrees of interagency cooperation, and have differing judgments about the effectiveness of their own and other community agencies involved with the problem of child abuse.

REVIEW

This chapter has surveyed the literature relating to the response of community organizations to the problem of child abuse. While there is a consensus that community action is warranted in cases of child abuse, there is substantial disagreement about the nature of community involvement and, consequently, the approaches of intervention.

Specifically, child abuse authorities disagree about whether law enforcement or social service agencies should have dispositional authority over child abuse reports since it is conceded that the disposition of reported child abuse cases is a function of agency involvement. The available data do not provide sufficient evidence, however, to substantiate this hypothesis. The research data do indicate that there are differences between social service and law enforcement agency personnel regarding their respective perceptions, expectations, and judgments about the problem of child abuse. The data also indicate that law enforcement and social service agencies receive abuse reports from different sources, perform differently when investigating these reports, and establish different case status determinations following the investigation. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that different dispositions

are generated when the respective agencies intervene e.g. social service agencies may be less likely to seek removal of victims from their families.

In any case, a substantial proportion of the victims are removed, at least temporarily, from their homes. On the one hand, some kind of foster placement usually insures against subsequent abuse, although there are some data to suggest that there are long term psychological costs to the victim. On the other hand, a substantial proportion of abused children that remain at home are reinjured despite a variety of treatments rendered to their families, and, perhaps because little is done to perpetrators.

Given these facts and some evidence relating to agency differences in how reported child abuse is handled within the community, the question remains:

Is what happens to child abuse victims, their families, and perpetrators related to which community agency gets involved in the case?

The following chapter presents the design of the study that will generate data to provide an answer.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the design of the study and to provide the rationale for selecting that design. First, the theoretical foundation is presented and then translated into the appropriate conceptual framework. From this framework is generated the study hypothesis which is operationally defined. The variables employed to quantify the data are discussed. The specific relationships between and among the study variables are presented and the methodology described in order to demonstrate how the study data are manipulated to provide the empirical evidence with which to test the study hypothesis.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

According to Kaplan (1964), the primary objective of theory is to impart understanding to phenomena i.e. to make manifest the logic which presumably relates certain observable behaviors. Consequently, theory may serve two related purposes: (1) to explain why observed behavior has occurred and (2) to predict what behavior will occur on the basis of why behavior did occur. Having presented the pertinent data on community disposition of suspected child abuse reports, it remains to provide a framework with which to impart some coherence to the observed behaviors represented in the empirical data. Presumably, an explanation of behavior will generate some predictive statement (hypothesis) which will be tested with the data collected and analyzed in this study.

Since child abuse has been designated a community problem, "in our society, complex formal organizations are the principle mechanism by which goals . . . can be accomplished for the benefit of a group of individuals" (Theisen, 1972: 8 citing Francis and Stone; Parsons; Thompson). In this context, complex, formal organizations essentially mean public bureaucracies which Weber initially characterized as being distinguished by "a complex administrative hierarchy, specialization of skills and tasks, prescribed limits in discretion set forth in a system of rules [and] impersonal behavior with regard to clientele . . ." (Peabody and Rourke, 1965: 803). With respect to bureaucratic human resources, Parsons quoted in Theisen (1972) finds that:

. . . there are really two types of expertise. One is a product of the organization, is answerable to certain rules and regulations, and develops routinized skills necessary to perform organizational functions; the other type of expertise is based on a possession of knowledge and skills with decisions governed not by self interest but by judgment of what will serve the client's best interest.

Applying this dual conception of bureaucratic expertise to the specific study of public agencies involved in the problem of child abuse, the respective executions of child abuse reporting legislation by law enforcement and social service agencies may depend upon: (1) the agency personnel expertise derived from the administrative procedures and services provided by the respective bureaucracies and (2) the perceptions and training that respective agency personnel have. Given the same task to execute i.e. receipt and investigation of reported child abuse, it follows that different outcomes may result if law enforcement and social service agency personnel possess different expertise as described above.

Other intraorganizational factors e.g. structure, and extraorganizational factors e.g. client characteristics may influence agency res-

ponse to the problems of child abuse in the community. The lack of certainty about the etiology or even the definition of abuse, however, suggests that the discretion exercised by agency personnel is the determining factor in the agency response to reported child abuse. Both Theisen (1972) and (Goodpaster and Angel, 1975) observed a substantial degree of "nonroutine decisionmaking" among agency personnel in their respective studies of public agency involvement in child abuse in St. Louis and Los Angeles. In contrast to disposition decisions based on facts, nonroutine decisionmaking involves "judgment on the nature of the evidence to be collected" i.e. "signs, trends, syndromes, and clues" and "the application of criteria to evidence" which "may depend on the artfulness of the decisionmakers and the constraints placed upon them as much as on the nature and extent of the information" (Nagi, 1974: 48-49). In fact, Nagi (1976) found that law enforcement and social service agency personnel representing sixty percent of the national population, projected from a nationwide probability sample survey, made the decisions about the temporary removal of victims reported for child abuse. In organizational theory parlance, these organizations represent examples of professional bureaucracies which according to Friedson cited in Theisen (1972) subordinate organizational routines to their own expertise, As a consequence, Theisen (1972: 10) states:

The definition of work to be performed, of the roles to be played by other nonprofessional employees and by clients, is created as much by the force and ideology of the dominant professionals as the purely technical aspects.

Alternatively stated by Gelles (1975: 1)

[Agency personnel] play major and active roles in defining the nature and scope of the problem. Moreover, the definition of the problem which they employ determine which cases are likely to be processed and which ones will be missed by these agencies.

The available research on agency disposition of reported child abuse appears to support the derivative hypothesis that the ideological orientation of the recipient agency is the pivotal determinant in what happens to a report of suspected child abuse. Evidence presented in the preceding chapter indicates that perceptions of the problem of child abuse vary according to organizational type. The research also indicates that, on several relevant performance measures, response by law enforcement and social services agencies to reports of child abuse is different. Given the high degree of discretion in handling child abuse, a theory might explain that abuse case disposition is related to orientation of the agency that becomes involved in the case. This theory will predict that the disposition of suspected child abuse reports is determined by which agency gets involved in the case. The conceptual framework for formulating an operational hypothesis to test this theory is presented immediately below.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

While the prevalence of child abuse is not restricted to urban communities, (Polansky et al., 1968), the incidence of reported child abuse is significantly higher in densely populated areas (Gil, 1970; Johnson, 1974). The Gil (1970) national survey found that although 67% of the population lived in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's), 81.9% of the child abuse reports originated from those jurisdictions in 1968. The Johnson (1974) survey of southeastern states found similarly that 44.2% of the reported cases (N = 1,172) came from just the 36 counties (representing 5.3% of the 668 jurisdictions) with populations of 100,000 or more. In Oregon 26% of the cases reported to the Central

Registry ($N = 909$) in 1976 came from Multnomah County, the largest urban jurisdiction.

Young (1964: 50) offers an explanation for these findings:

This certainly does not mean that the city itself causes parents to abuse their children. It may mean that the greater impersonality, the greater anonymity of the large city permits behavior like this to be more openly expressed.

Moreover, Gelles (1975: 11) hypothesizes that the more impersonal social relationships become, "the more chance there is that abuse will be observed and reported" (my emphasis). In fact, Johnson (1974) finds that only 17.1% of the counties with populations below 10,000 ($N = 140$) compared with 97.2% of the counties with 100,000 or more ($N = 35$) registered reports of child abuse. While the phenomenon of child abuse is probably not geographic per se, the evidence supports a conclusion that child abuse is a problem for the urban community.

Characteristically, no single entity handles child abuse in an urban community. A number of individuals, agencies and institutions function as components in what can be conceived as the community's child abuse "system". Mandated and motivated reporters constitute the detection and reporting component. Public agencies - law enforcement and/or social service organizations - perform the investigatory and dispositional functions. Various public and private institutions protect the child abuse victim and prevent subsequent abuse. An urban child abuse "system" can be analyzed according to process, function, and performer. Process defines the formal operational categories of a system. Function delineates the specific operations in the child abuse system. Performer describes the community components that perform these operations. This analysis is schematically represented in FIGURE 2.

The analysis of a community's child abuse "system" follows the typical input - operations - output model commonly described in the literature (Johnson, 1974 citing Rosenberg and Brody). It should be noted that a community's response to the problem of child abuse may not be systematic in that sense that a formal, preconceived plan has been developed. More often, already existing community performers modify their respective functions in response to environmental changes e.g. demands imposed by legislation or requests from other performers.

In general, "income" represents that problem which impacts on the system; "inputs" define the relevant characteristics of the problem that will be treated; "operations" identify the manipulation of the problem; "outputs" connote the resulting treatments; and "outcome" describes the effects of the treatment. The application of this analysis to a community's child abuse "system" is presented immediately below and represented immediately below and represented in FIGURE 2, below.

Income

Within any jurisdiction, some (unknown) proportion of the at-risk population i.e. persons under eighteen years old is abused. Consequently, the pertinent characteristics of the victims, their families, and the perpetrators are not known.

Inputs

Some (undetermined) percentage of these abused children is detected and referred to authorities by reporters. These reported cases of suspected abuse constitute the population subject to agency intervention.

Operations

Agency involvement in child abuse begins with a determination of

status. A proportion of child abuse reports excluding false positives are determined to be valid. These cases constitute the caseload subject to agency disposition. Generally speaking, it is this group that represents the sample from which the child abuse research draws data.

Outputs

The disposition of confirmed abuse cases results in no or some institutional action on behalf of the victims, to their families, and for or against the perpetrators.

Outcome

The impact of services on the clientele, variously measured, determines the extent to which the problem of child abuse has been resolved.

This conceptualization of a community's child abuse system establishes the framework for a specific study of agency disposition of reported child abuse.

<u>PROCESS</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>	<u>PERFORMER</u>
Income	Child Abuse	Perpetrators
Inputs	Detection/Reporting	Mandated and Motivated Reporters
Operations	Investigation/Disposition	Public Agencies
Outputs	Protection/Prevention	Public and Private Institutions
Outcome	No Child Abuse	Perpetrators

Figure 2. Schematic analysis of a community's child abuse "system".

STUDY DESIGN

The object of this study is to provide an empirical answer to the question:

Does the way in which child abuse is handled by a community differ according to whether a law enforcement or a social service agency intervenes on its behalf?

The primary obstacle in obtaining conclusive evidence to satisfy the study question is what Rossi and Wright (1977: 6) term the "problem of the problem." In other words, a properly designed research study must above all insure the "correctness of casual inferences" generated from the collected and analyzed data. It is only by certain formulation and precise operationalization of hypotheses that valid conclusions may be drawn from data (Rossi and Wright; 1977: 9). Following is a presentation of the operationalized hypotheses, a description of the pertinent variables, and a discussion of the relationships to be tested in this study.

Hypotheses

For the purposes of this study, the research question is formally restated as:

The disposition of reported child abuse is related to agency involvement.

Disposition may be related to other factors. To control for these "competing" factors (Rossi and Wright, 1977), the primary hypothesis should be tested against the alternative hypothesis:

The disposition of reported child abuse is related to the characteristics of the client population or mediated by the structural features of the child abuse "system."

As Rossi and Wright (1977: 11) affirm: "Well established research requires the careful conceptual and operational specification of major relevant variables." The pertinent conceptual and operational variables follow:

Conceptual Variables

Conceptual variables provide the definition of terms used in the hypothesis of this study.

Disposition identifies the set of decisions made to protect child abuse victims and prevent subsequent abuse.

Reported Child Abuse refers to that proportion of child abuse incidents which come to the attention of public authorities.

Agency Involvement signifies the set of decisions taken by designated agencies upon receipt of child abuse reports.

Client Population Characteristics connote the demographic and epidemiologic features of child abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators that are frequently enumerated in the child abuse literature.

Structural Features connote those operations within the child abuse "system" that may assign qualitatively different child abuse reports to investigating agencies in a nonrandom way.

Operational Variables

For the purposes of this study, these conceptual variables have been operationalized as follows:

Disposition includes temporary protective custody, social services, juvenile court adjudication, foster placement, and criminal prosecution.

Reported Child Abuse connotes the set of child abuse reports which, upon investigation, are determined to be valid and are forwarded to the State Central Registry.

Agency Involvement is determined by which agency - local law enforcement agencies or the Children's Services Division - had primary responsibility for investigating the reports of child abuse.

Client Population Characteristics include the sex, age, race of the victim and perpetrator; the location, sibship, and socioeconomic status of the household; abuse history of the victims, and perpetrators; and the history of agency contact with the victim, caretakers, and perpetrators.

Structural Features refer to the relationships among the sources that report the abuse, the agencies that receive the reports, the agencies that make initial contact with the victims, and the investigating agencies.

In total, the study collected data on forty-two pertinent variables. Following is a discussion of how these variables were related to elicit evidence with which to test the study hypothesis.

Relationships

What happens to reportee child abuse when public agencies intervene includes the disposition of the abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators. On the basis of the assumption that disposition is largely determined by which public agency actually investigated a reported case of child abuse, dispositions are cross tabulated with investigating agencies (FIGURE 3).

	<u>Investigating agency</u>		
<u>Disposition</u>	CSD	LEA	CSDLEA
Placements of Victims			
Referrals to Families			
Action to Perpetrators			

Figure 3. The study hypothesis: the relationship between disposition of reported child abuse and investigating agencies

The disposition of the victims is determined by whether the children remained in their homes or were removed to be placed in some type of foster care. The disposition of the families of the victims is determined by whether the families were referred for some kind of social services. The disposition of the perpetrators is determined by whether some kind of community action was directed against the perpetrators.

Agency investigations of reported child abuse are performed by:

(1) the Children's Services Division alone (CSD); (2) a law enforcement agency alone (LEA) i.e. the Portland Police Department, the Multnomah County Deputy Sheriffs, the Troutdale Police Department, the Gresham Police Department, the Oregon State Police, or the Multnomah County Juvenile Court; or (3) the Children's Services Division and a law enforcement agency working together (CSDLEA).

Cases investigated by agencies may not, however, be randomly distributed. Investigating agencies are cross tabulated with the pertinent variables to determine whether these agencies receive qualitatively different caseloads. (FIGURE 4). These variables are subdivided into factors pertaining to community child abuse "system" structure, the victims, the families, and the perpetrators as follows:

Structural Factors describe those operations within the community's child abuse "system" that may selectively assign cases to several investigating agencies. Which agency investigates a report of suspected child abuse may be related to:

1. the source which reported the suspected abuse to the public authorities;
2. the agency which originally received the complaint.

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Investigating agency</u>		
	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>
Structural			
Reporting Source			
Receiving Agency			
Victim			
Number			
Sex			
Age			
Race			
Ordinal Position			
Type of Abuse			
History of Abuse			
Agency Contact			
Family			
Sibship			
Parentship			
Socioeconomic Status			
Household Location			
Agency Contact			
Perpetrators			
Sex			
Age			
Race			
Identity			
Abuse History			
Agency Contact			

Figure 4. Distribution of caseloads among the investigating agencies.

Victim Factors represent those characteristics of the abuse victims that may influence which agency investigates the case including:

1. the sex, age and race, and the ordinal position within the family of the victims;
2. the type of abuse sustained by the victims;
3. the history of abuse suffered by the victims;
4. the previous agency contact by the victims.

Family Factors designate those features of the families of the abuse victims that may attract particular investigating agencies on a nonrandom basis including:

1. the number of family and other members living in the households of the victims;
2. the parentship of the families e.g. single parent families;
3. the socioeconomic status of the families e.g. welfare;
4. the previous agency contact with the families; and
5. the geographic location of the homes of the families.

Perpetrator Factors represent those characteristics and features of the alleged perpetrators that may decisively effect which agency investigates including:

1. the age, sex, and race of the perpetrators;
2. the identify of the alleged perpetrators e.g. parent, stranger;
3. the history of abuse committed by the perpetrators;
4. the previous agency contact by the perpetrator.

The disposition of reported child abuse, likewise, may be determined by factors other than which agency investigated the report. In order to ascertain to what extent these other factors affect disposition, the study hypothesis is partitioned by the pertinent variables to test the alternative hypothesis:

Disposition is related to the characteristics of the client population and/or the structural features of the community child abuse "system."

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Questions concerning the actual disposition of child abuse cases dictate the necessity for research in an "action setting." Field study

of ongoing programs encounters the obvious problem that the research environment is not within the control of the researcher. Consequently, research in situ imposes certain restrictions which may limit the quantity and quality of the data. For example, organizations are not inclined to extensively document activities given the typical constraints on material and human resources. Whatever documentation exists conforms to the administrative demands of the organization and not necessarily the empirical needs of the researcher. Moreover, records of agency activity may reflect the orientation of the organization and, of course, the perspective of the recorder. Consequently, the researcher is obliged to exercise an innovative manipulation of available resources to provide adequate data with which to test hypotheses. The problems encountered and the techniques employed to assay empirical data are discussed in the following sections.

Study Population

The selection of the study population constitutes the sine qua non of data collection in field studies where the universe is not available. In the case of child abuse, of course, the universe of incidents is simply not known. What is available are the set of suspected abuse reports that come to the attention of public authorities. This "report load" contains a proportion of cases that are unfounded i.e. the alleged mistreatment does not constitute legally reportable abuse. This report load, however, does not meet certain necessary criteria for the purposes of this study. Most importantly, agency action does not generally follow reports of suspected child abuse determined to be unfounded. Reports validated upon investigation are forwarded to the State Central Registry and constitute a potential study caseload. On the one hand, the completion of the Central Registry form provides documentation from which data may be extracted. On

the other hand, the submission of a central registry report is solid, although not conclusive, evidence that the victim's alleged mistreatment was abuse. Consequently, there is a high probability that central registry reports will become the caseload for law enforcement agencies and/or the Children's Services Division.

In 1976, 909 child abuse reports across the state were filed in the State Central Registry physically located in Salem, Oregon. One quarter of those reports originated from Multnomah County, the largest urban jurisdiction in Oregon, containing the City of Portland and the most developed complex of social, medical and legal agencies. Within this County, police and sheriff departments, a special juvenile part of the circuit court, a multi-branched office of the Children's Services Division including a special Shelter Care Unit, and numerous public and private hospitals including the Rosenfeld Center for the Study and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect comprise the primary child abuse "system." In addition, there are several extensive public school systems, private schools, public and private child care facilities, family counseling services, chapters of Parents Anonymous as well as the typical distribution of legal, medical, and psychological professionals. Given the large proportion of reported child abuse from this jurisdiction, the full and active complement of designated recipient and investigating agencies, the relatively numerous representation of mandated reporters, and the comparative heterogeneity of the population, the Central Registry reports originating from Multnomah County were selected as the population for this study.

Time Frame

Since the law which authorized law enforcement agencies and the

the Children's Services Division as recipients of suspected child abuse reports became effective September 13, 1975, the sample consists of reports filed during the subsequent sixteen months.

Data Collection

The principal source of the study data was the case records of the sample. These included:

1. Child Abuse Report to the Central Registry
2. Police and Sheriff reports
3. Juvenile Court documents and reports
4. Children's Services Division documents and reports

Since these records were stored in different locations, a procedure was developed to aggregate all pertinent materials. The reports originating from the study jurisdiction were extricated from the files of the Central Registry.

These reports were matched to the case record file in the central office of the Children's Services Division in Multnomah County to determine the location of each case among the five Division branches. The researcher visited each branch and read every available case record.

All pertinent information was transferred to a data collection instrument revised and pretested by the author. To insure the accuracy of the transfer and to collect data not ascertained from the case record, the responsible caseworker was interviewed. Each interview lasted approximately twenty-five minutes. Interviews were completed for 85.7% of the cases in the study ($N = 220$). The missing interviews for the remaining 14.3% of the cases are due to the unavailability of the caseworker i.e. the individual had left the employ of the Children's Services Division or the inability to determine the identity of the responsible caseworker.

Data Analysis

This study collected the universe of Central Registry reports as the study population. There are two positions regarding the analysis of data extracted from a universe in contrast to a sample of subjects. The Bayesian approach maintains that the data should be construed in the context of an infinite set of possible events which, therefore, require application of standard statistical tests to identify differences between the study population and any other possible population. The Fisherian approach maintains that statistical tests applied to a universe are inappropriate since the data are not replicable in time, and by definition unique. Given this disagreement, in approach and in view of the relatively small size of the study population, standard statistical tests were not applied to the study data in order to preclude unwarranted inferences based on artificial statistical manipulations.

Instead, the data are subjected to what might be termed a directional analysis. Specifically, the general findings generated by relating the dispositions of the abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators are compared to the specific findings generated when these relationships are partitioned by characteristics of the study population that may influence that relationship. This approach allows a basic determination of whether (1) disposition is directly related to certain characteristics of the study population; (2) the relationship between disposition and investigating agency hold irrespective of characteristics of the study population; and (3) whether there is an interrelationship among the characteristics of the study population, investigating agency and disposition.

Data Presentation

The data presented in all tables are expressed in percentages except as otherwise labeled. Although the study population comprised 220 cases, certain tables that fall below this total reflect the fact that data for some cases were not ascertained. Table totals above 220 cases reflect the fact that some cases involved more than one victim.

REVIEW

This chapter presented the study hypothesis within a conceptual framework generated from a theory of organizations. The theory explains that nonroutine decisions reflect ideological differences in disposition-making organizations. Applied to a community's child abuse "system," the theory predicts that disposition of child abuse reports, when handled by agencies with differing ideologies, will be consistently different. As restated in a formal hypothesis, the disposition of reported child abuse is related to the agency which becomes involved in the cases. Agency involvement is operationally defined to mean the agency which investigated the cases. Since disposition may be related to other factors including the characteristics of the study population or the structure of the child abuse "system," this alternative hypothesis is stated as a way of testing and evaluating the study data as described in the section on methodology.

CHAPTER V

THE STUDY POPULATION

As a way of introducing the data relating to the study hypothesis, this chapter presents a description of the study population including pertinent characteristics of the abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators and an analysis of the distribution of the study population among the agencies which investigated the child abuse reports.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY POPULATION

From September 13, 1975 to January 13, 1977, 282 child abuse reports from Multnomah County were filed with the Central Registry. Of these reports, fifteen were duplicates, fourteen were transferred to another jurisdiction, and the case records of the remaining thirty-three reports were not located (FIGURE 5). Consequently, the study population represents 82.4% of the total number of reported child abuse incidents ($\underline{N} = 267$).

Slightly more than 15% of the child abuse reports ($\underline{N} = 220$) involved more than one child. Thus, the study population numbers 262 child abuse victims. (TABLE II). More than two-thirds of the reported incidents took place in the home of the victim. When computed according to a seasonal year, the largest proportion of the reported incidents occurred in the spring. March was the month in which the largest number of reports ($\underline{N} = 22$) was filed with the Central Registry.

Multnomah County reports (9/13/75 - 1/13/77)	282
Duplicate reports of the same incident	15
Actual number of reported child abuse cases.	267
Cases transferred to another jurisdiction.	14
Case records not located	33
Study population cases	220

Figure 5. Deprivation of the study population.

TABLE II

CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS PER CASE

	<u>One</u>	<u>Two</u>	<u>Three</u>	<u>Four</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Cases</u>	186	28	4	2	220
<u>Victims</u>	186	56	12	8	262
<u>Percentage</u>	84.5	12.7	1.8	1.0	100.0

Victims

The pertinent characteristics of the victims in the study population are presented in TABLE III and discussed immediately below.

Sex. The 1970 Census determined that among the children under eighteen living in Multnomah County ($N = 168,085$), 50.6% were male and 49.4% were female. In the study population, however, 47.9% are male and 53.1% are female. This over representation of female victims may be explained by the relationships between and among sex, age, and type of abuse analyzed below.

Age. Children less than six years old constituted 41.8% of the children in the study population. Almost half of these victims were infants. Children between six and eleven years old represented 29.3% of the victims and the remaining 28.9% were twelve years of age or older. Comparable proportions of all children in Multnomah County were 29.9%, 34.1%, and 36.0% respectively. Several factors may, at least in part, explain the overrepresentation of infants and younger children (Maden, 1975). These children demand almost continuous physical and emotional attention, but provide little or no meaningful social interaction in return. These children are less mobile and more fragile and, consequently, most likely to sustain a serious injury from an assault. An assault against older children may be more likely to be regarded as overdiscipline and more often considered to be an accidental injury (c.f. Johnson, 1974).

TABLE III

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIMS BY SEX

<u>Age (Years)</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Total</u>
0 - 5	51.8	33.6	103	41.9
6 - 11	33.0	26.1	72	29.3
12 - 17	15.2	40.3	71	28.9
Total	100.0	100.0	246	100.0
<u>Ordinal Position</u>				
Eldest	49.5	48.4	107	48.9
Youngest	28.4	18.5	50	22.8
Middle	22.1	33.1	62	28.3
Total	100.0	100.0	219	100.0
<u>Race</u>				
White	78.5	89.1	219	84.2
Nonwhite	21.5	9.8	41	15.8
Total	100.0	100.0	260	100.0
<u>Type of Abuse</u>				
Physical	85.7	59.7	176	71.5
Sexual	8.9	32.1	53	21.5
Neglect	5.4	8.2	17	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	246	100.0
<u>Abuse History</u>				
Initial	52.3	37.4	107	48.2
Episodic	47.7	62.6	115	51.8
Total	100.0	100.0	222	100.0
<u>Agency Contact</u>				
None	44.7	55.3	96	51.3
Previous	56.9	43.1	91	48.7
Total	100.0	100.0	187	100.0

Sex and Age. As suggested in other studies (e.g. Gil, 1970; Fergusson et al., 1972; Johnson, 1974), this study finds a significant relationship between the age and sex of abused children. More of the younger victims were males (55.6%), whereas most of the adolescents (76.1%) were females. Gil (1970) suggests this pattern reflects that females are less subject than males to physical punishment until they become involved in heterosexual relationships during adolescence. To the contrary, Maden and Wrench (1977) cite evidence which indicates that girls are more severely punished at an earlier age, but that adolescent boys report physical punishment twice as frequently as girls. Those authors suggest that physical abuse against females is less likely to be reported.

Ordinal Position. Almost three-fourths of the victims occupied the polar positions in the family sibship. Nearly half the victims were first born and 22.8% were last born. As Smith (1975) notes, however, when ordinal position is related to family size, the relationship between the abuse victim and his position in the sibship becomes artifactual.

Race. The proportion of white (84.2%) and nonwhite (15.8%) abuse victims correspond to the racial distribution of the general population. It is worth noting that 63.4% of the nonwhite victims were male.

Type of Abuse. Physical injuries continue to constitute the most frequently reported abuse in this study (71.5%) and throughout the State of Oregon. Since the statutory definition of reportable child abuse was amended to specifically include sexual molestation, however, (see CHAPTER II), the proportion of sexual abuse reports has increased annually. More than twenty percent of the victims in this study were reported for sexual abuse. Although neglect leading to physical harm was also included in the amended definition, only 6.9% of the abuse reported in this study fall into that category.

Age, Sex, and Abuse. An analysis of the study data indicates that the type of abuse is significantly related to the age of the victim. (TABLE IV). Children who sustained physical injuries and, especially, who suffered neglect were most likely to be younger, whereas close to half the abuse suffered by older children and adolescents was sexual molestation. This relationship and several of the findings presented above may be explained and harmonized by the significant relationship between the type of abuse and the sex of the victim.

TABLE IV
TYPE OF ABUSE BY AGE OF THE VICTIMS

<u>N = 246</u>					
<u>Type of Abuse</u>	<u>0 - 5</u>	<u>6 - 11</u>	<u>12 - 17</u>	<u>N</u>	Total
Physical					
Not serious	41.3	28.4	30.3	155	100.0
Serious	90.5	4.8	4.8	21	100.0
Sexual	7.5	49.1	43.4	53	100.0
Neglect	94.1	5.9	0.0	17	100.0
Total	41.9	29.3	28.9	246	100.0

Maden and Wrench (1977) noted that surveys which found a larger proportion of older children and adolescents typically included cases of sexual abuse whereas clinical studies which reported the opposite finding usually considered only physical abuse. Sexual molestation constituted 21.5% of this study population, but 81.1% of these victims were female. Of all the cases in the study population, 17.9% were sexual abuse committed against females compared with 4.1% perpetrated against males. The overrepresentation of female victims in this study, in contrast to most others

(Maden and Wrench, 1977) is mainly attributable to the disproportionate distribution of sexual abuse incidents. Since sexual abuse is characteristically committed against adolescent females, this largely explains the relationship between the age and sex of the abuse victims.

Abuse History. Like much of the previous research (Maden and Wrench, 1977), the study discovered that in a majority of cases, victims have had a history of mistreatment. That more females (62.6%) than males (47.7%) in the study population have been episodically abused probably represents the fact that sexual molestation, in particular, has a pattern of chronicity.

Agency Contact Almost half the abuse victims had been known to local law enforcement agencies or the Children's Services Division prior to the reported abuse incident. Of those children, 76.1% had received or were receiving protective services already; an additional 12.5% received other child welfare services; and the remaining 11.5% were delinquents. Comparatively more abused males (56.9%) than females (43.1%) had previous agency contacts. It should be noted that about one-half of the siblings of the abuse victims had previous agency contact, and of these, more than one-fourth had been contacted because of child abuse.

Families

The pertinent features of the families of the abuse victims are presented in TABLE V and discussed immediately below.

Family Sibship. More than three-fourths of the families had less than four children although previous studies had indicated that child abuse is more frequent among families with more than four siblings (Light, 1973). Maden (1975) notes that studies which established this relationship included a disproportionate number of nonwhite families known

to have larger families. The relatively small number of nonwhite families in this study may account for the family sibship finding.

Family Parentship. While the majority of the abused children lived in their parental homes. 36.1% of the families were headed by a single parent, almost always, the biological mother. In approximately one-half of the intact families, a stepparent, usually a stepfather, had replaced a natural parent. Only 7.9% of the abused children lived away from their natural parents. These data correspond to findings reported in most other studies (Maden, 1975).

TABLE V
SELECTED FEATURES OF THE FAMILIES

<u>Family Sibship</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>N</u>
Less than four	78.5	157
More than four	22.5	43
Total	100.0	200
<u>Family Parentship</u>		
Single	36.1	78
Both biological	27.8	60
Biological and step	28.2	61
Guardian	7.9	17
Total	100.0	216
<u>Household Socioeconomic Status</u>		
Welfare	48.9	92
Lower	12.8	24
Middle	23.9	45
Professional	14.7	27
Total	100.0	188

Household Location

North	17.4	34
Northeast	30.8	60
Southeast	41.5	81
Southwest	6.2	12
Northwest	4.1	8
Total	100.0	195
0 - 40 block	46.7	79
41 - 82 block	32.5	55
83 - 163 block	12.4	21
163 block -	8.3	14
Total	100.0	169

Agency Contact

None	32.0	64
Previous	68.0	136
Total	100.0	200

Household Socioeconomic Status.⁵ Nearly all previous studies demonstrate that the majority of abusing families occupy the low socioeconomic strata (Maden, 1975). Maden and Wrench (1977) observe that these studies draw a disproportionate number of low socioeconomic status subjects (SES) due, at least in part, to biased reporting. Moreover, while this study's data indicate that 48.9% of the families had been receiving public assistance, it is important to note that low SES is significantly related to single parent families. Of all the welfare families in this study, (N = 92), 46.3% are single parent households. Interestingly enough, this study finds a somewhat more even distribution of families according to socioeconomic status as suggested by Steele and Pollock (1968). On the one hand, about 15% of the perpetrators (see below) were not members of the victim's household and may not be subject to the stresses of poverty that have been associated with child abuse (Gil, 1970). On the other hand, broader responsibility for identifying and reporting child abuse, particularly among school personnel, may increase the number of suspected child abuse victims from the middle class.

Household Location. The study data substantiate the conclusion that child abuse is a problem in the urban community (See Chapter IV). Most

⁵ The data with which to compute family income were not available. In order to approximate the socioeconomic status of the families, the caseworkers were asked to categorize their clients as follows: (1) welfare - families had been receiving some form of public assistance; (2) lower class - head of household was unemployed/underemployed and family income was marginal; (3) head of household was regularly employed and receiving an "average" salary (4) head of household was employed and garnering a "professional" income. For purposes of analysis, categories 1 and 2 were collapsed into "lower class" and categories 3 and 4 were collapsed into "middle class."

of the families of the abused children live in denser areas within the City of Portland (0 - 82 block) along the North-Northeast-Southeast corridor. This section is known to include major poverty areas within Multnomah County.

Agency Contact. More than half of the families in this study had previous contact with local law enforcement agencies or the Children's Services Division. Of these families, 53.7% had received or were receiving protective services. This finding lends substance to Smith's (1975) conclusion that the current state of agency intervention is not particularly effective in preventing child abuse (See CHAPTER III).

Perpetrators

The pertinent characteristics of the alleged perpetrators are presented in TABLE VI and discussed immediately below.

Sex. In contrast to most previous studies (Maden and Wrench, 1977), the data indicate that 59.1% of the perpetrators were male. Maden (1975) observes that the sex of the perpetrator may be related to the age of the victim. Mothers are more likely to abuse younger children since they traditionally assume the greater share of caretaking for them, whereas fathers more frequently assault older children since they are traditionally responsible for meting out physical punishment. Moreover, nearly all cases of sexual abuse involve male perpetrators. That older children and adolescents comprise the majority in the study population and that a sizeable proportion of the child abuse is sexual molestation may explain the sexual distribution of perpetrators in this study.

Age. Although many studies find that most perpetrators are around twenty-five years old (Maden 1975), the data show that the modal age

TABLE VI

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ALLEGED PERPETRATORS

	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	59.1	123
Female	40.1	85
Total	100.0	208
<u>Age</u>		
0 - 20	15.6	30
21 - 25	15.6	30
26 - 30	19.3	37
31 - 35	20.3	39
36 - 45	22.9	44
46 -	6.3	12
Total	100.0	192
<u>Race</u>		
White	85.9	183
Nonwhite	14.1	30
Total	100.0	213
<u>Identity</u>		
Biological parent	55.8	120
Stepparent	17.7	38
Foster parent	2.8	6
Sibling	5.1	11
Relative	1.9	4
Friend of parent	8.8	19
Child care provider	7.0	15
Stranger	0.9	2
Total	100.0	215
<u>Abuse History</u>		
None	52.6	103
Previous or subsequent	47.4	93
Total	100.0	196
<u>Agency Contact</u>		
None	45.0	85
Previous	55.0	104
Total	100.0	189

group was thirty-one to thirty-five (20.3%). Since the prevalent finding in previous studies may be an artifact of the age of the victims (Maden and Wrench, 1977) the fact that the majority of the study population are older children and adolescents may explain the opposite finding in this study.

Race. The finding that 85.8% of the perpetrators are white corresponds, as expected, to the racial distribution of the abuse victims given that the large majority were abused by members of their families (see below).

Identity. As in most studies (Maden, 1975), the large majority of perpetrators (76.3%) were parents of the victims. Another seven percent were also related to the victim corroborating the conclusion that child abuse is primarily a family affair (Maden, 1975). Less than one percent were complete strangers and the remaining 15.8% were friends of the parents or child care providers acting in loco parentis.

Abuse History. Given the pattern of chronicity associated with child abuse, this study's data show that a large proportion of perpetrators (47.4%) had committed child abuse prior to the instant report.

Agency Contact. More than half of the perpetrators were previously known to local law enforcement agencies or the Children's Services Division or both.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY POPULATION

Johnson (1974) speculates that different child abuse investigating agencies receive qualitatively different caseloads. Following is an analysis of the caseload characteristics of the investigating agencies in this study prefaced by a description of the process by which the child

abuse reports were referred to them.

Structure

An analysis of the child abuse reporting "system" reveals that the components of the system generate a pattern of case distribution among the investigating agencies. Specifically, it will be shown that the agency that receives the child abuse report does not invariably investigate the case. How the child abuse reports are distributed among the investigating agencies is discussed immediately below.

Reporting Source. Community agency involvement in the problem of child abuse is initiated when reporters notify designated authorities of suspected abuse. As previously noted (See, CHAPTER III), the largest proportion of suspected child abuse was reported by parents, relatives, friends, neighbors, and the victims themselves (TABLE VII). Kith and kin were responsible for 50.7% of the reports. Social service, law enforcement, and child care agencies, but particularly schools, reported 25.1% of the incidents. Medical sources, primarily community hospitals, accounted for another 21.5% of the reports. Professional sources including attorneys, psychologists, clergymen, etc. constituted less than one percent of the reports, although they are mandated by law to notify authorities of suspected abuse (See, CHAPTER II). Strangers and anonymous sources called in the remaining 1.8% of the reports.

Receiving Agency. Given the choice between local law enforcement agencies and the Children's Services Division, two-thirds of the reporters notified the former. The Children's Services Division received 29.7% of the reports and 3.7% of the reporters decided to notify both agencies. The data do not, however, permit a conclusion about whether the preference for reporting to law enforcement agencies simply reflects a lack of

knowledge about the available choice of receiving agencies.

TABLE VII

REPORTING SOURCE BY RECEIVING AGENCY

N = 219

<u>Reporting Source</u>	<u>Receiving Agency</u>				<u>N</u>
	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSD & LEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Medical	23.1	19.2	50.0	21.5	43
Professional	1.5	0.7	0.0	0.9	2
Agency	24.6	25.3	25.0	25.1	53
Kith and Kin	49.2	52.7	25.0	50.7	111
Other	1.5	2.1	0.0	1.8	4
Total	29.7	66.7	3.7	100.0	
<u>N</u>	65	146	8		219

Investigating Agency. Although law enforcement agencies received the majority of the reports, nearly half were referred to the Children's Services Division. The latter investigated 35.9% of the reports, the former investigated 34.1%, and both agencies jointly investigated an other 22.7% of the reports (TABLE VIII). The remaining 7.3% of the reports were investigated separately by the respective agencies.

TABLE VIII

RECEIVING AGENCY BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

N = 220

<u>Receiving Agency</u>	<u>Investigating</u>			
	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSD & LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>
CSD	58.2	6.7	12.5	24.0
LEA	38.0	90.7	81.3	72.0
CSD & LEA	3.8	2.7	6.3	4.0
Total	35.9	34.1	7.3	22.7
<u>N</u>	79	75	16	50

For the purpose of testing the study hypothesis, these sixteen cases were rejected from the study population in order to clarify the analysis. Therefore, the data presented in TABLE IX indicate the sources of the reports investigated, respectively, by CSD, LEA and CSDLEA.

TABLE IX
REPORTING SOURCE BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

<u>Reporting Source</u>	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>N</u>
Medical	19.0	26.0	13.7	20.2	41
Professional	1.3	2.0	0.0	1.0	2
Agency	32.9	20.5	27.5	27.2	55
Kith and Kin	44.3	52.1	56.9	50.2	102
Other	2.5	1.4	0.0	1.5	3
Total	38.9	36.0	25.1	100.0	203
<u>N</u>					

While all three investigating agencies draw the largest proportion of the caseloads from kith and kin abuse reports, note that the largest proportion of the CSDLEA caseload (56.9%) comes from this source compared with LEA (52.1%) and CSD (44.3%). Reports from agencies constitute the comparatively largest proportion (32.9%) in the CSD caseload and medical sources represent the largest proportion (26.0%) of the LEA caseload when compared to CSD (19.0%) and CSDLEA (13.7%). When reporting source is related to the type of abuse (TABLE X), the data indicate that different sources are prone to detect different types of abuse. Note, in particular, that 26.1% of the kith and kin reports are sexual molestation compared with 6.4% of the medical and 16.1% of the agency reports. When these findings are related, they show that the CSDLEA caseload, comparatively speaking is largely composed of kith and kin reports, a large proportion of which are cases of sexual molestation.

TABLE X
REPORTING SOURCE BY TYPE OF ABUSE

N 220

<u>Reporting Source</u>	<u>Physical</u>	<u>Sexual</u>	<u>Neglect</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
Medical	83.0	6.4	10.6	21.4	47
Professional	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.9	2
Agency	78.6	16.1	5.4	25.5	56
Kith and Kin	65.8	26.1	8.1	50.5	111
Other	100.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	4
Total	72.8	19.5	7.8	100.0	220

Victims

A comparison of the characteristics of the victim population among the caseloads of the investigating agencies is presented in TABLE XI.

Although there were proportionally more females in the study population, 53.2% of the cases investigated by CSD were males compared with 48.0% investigated by LEA. Since the age and sex of abuse victims are significantly related, a larger proportion of the CSD cases (46.8%) were less than six years old whereas 70% of the LEA victims were older than six. Note that the 71.3% of the cases investigated by CSDLEA were older children or adolescents and, correspondingly, 64.7% were female.

The ordinal position of the children investigated by CSD, LEA and CSDLEA were differentially distributed in their respective caseloads. Compared against the total study population, eldest children constituted more of the CSDLEA cases (63.8%), youngest children (20.0%) were over-represented in the LEA caseload, and a greater proportion of middle children were investigated by CSD. Despite the relationship between the ordinal position and family size, 27.3% of the families investigated by CSD had more than four siblings compared with 36.7% of the CSDLEA cases (see below).

TABLE XI
COMPARISON OF THE VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS
AMONG AGENCY CASELOADS

	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Sex</u>					
Male	53.2	48.0	35.3	46.8	96
Female	46.8	52.0	64.7	53.2	109
<u>N</u>	79	75	51	100.0	205
<u>Age (years)</u>					
0 - 5	46.8	40.0	43.1	43.4	89
6 - 11	29.1	24.0	36.0	25.4	52
12 - 17	24.1	36.0	35.3	31.2	64
<u>N</u>	79	75	51	100.0	202
<u>Ordinal Position</u>					
Eldest	55.8	58.2	63.8	58.7	105
Youngest	15.6	20.0	10.6	15.6	28
Middle	28.6	21.8	25.5	25.7	46
<u>N</u>	77	55	47	100.0	179
<u>Race</u>					
White	87.3	77.3	82.4	82.4	151
Nonwhite	12.7	22.7	17.6	17.6	36
<u>N</u>	79	75	51	100.0	205
<u>Abuse</u>					
Physical	83.6	74.6	56.9	73.6	105
Sexual	11.4	18.7	33.3	19.5	40
Nelgect	5.1	6.7	9.8	6.8	14
<u>N</u>	79	75	51	100.0	205
<u>Abuse History</u>					
Initial	52.6	58.6	45.1	52.4	97
Episodic	47.4	41.4	54.9	47.6	88
<u>N</u>	76	58	51	100.0	185
<u>Agency Contact</u>					
None	52.6	50.0	50.0	51.1	95
Previous	47.4	50.0	50.0	48.9	91
<u>N</u>	78	58	50	100.0	186

Comparatively more of the CSD victims were white (87.3%) and more of LEA cases (22.7%) were nonwhite. Given that nonwhites are more likely to have larger families (Maden, 1975), this finding might be explained by the relatively smaller size of the CSD families, but even fewer (25.4%) of the LEA families had more than four siblings (See TABLE XII).

Cases according to the type of abuse were differentially distributed among the agencies. A larger proportion of the victims investigated by CSD sustained physical injuries (87.3%) compared with LEA victims (77.3%). Comparatively more LEA (18.7%) than CSD victims (11.4%) were sexually molested. Note, however, that sexual abuse victims constituted the largest proportion (33.3%) of the CSDLEA caseload compared with CSD or LEA and, in fact, 42.5% of all these cases were investigated by CSDLEA. The finding that CSDLEA cases are more likely to be older females coincides with this datum given the significant relationships between and among the sex, age, and type of abuse sustained by the victims.

In somewhat more of the cases investigated by LEA (58.6%) than CSD (52.6%) appeared to be the first known incident of abuse whereas 54.9% of the CSDLEA victims had been abused previously. This finding may reflect the fact that CSDLEA investigated the largest proportion of sexual abuse cases which are particularly associated with a pattern of chronicity. There appears to be very slight differences among the agency caseloads regarding the proportion of victims who had previous contact with the investigators.

In sum, the findings drawn from the data on victim characteristics reveal that the investigating agencies receive qualitatively different caseloads. When compared to LEA, the CSD caseload contains a larger

proportion of younger, male, white and physically abuse victims. Females, older children and particularly adolescents, and nonwhites constitute a larger proportion of the LEA caseload. The finding that LEA has a larger proportion of sexual abuse cases than CSD may be reflected in the caseload profile of the former. The findings, however, that nearly half the LEA cases are male and that more than three-fourths of the LEA victims sustained physical injury suggests that the law enforcement agencies are more likely to investigate older physically abused children characteristically subject to "overdiscipline" by male perpetrators (see below). The CSDLEA caseload is distinguished by the predominance of sexual abuse cases and therefore, contains the largest proportion of older children and victims who have a history of child abuse.

Families

An agency caseload comparison of the family features of the victims is presented in TABLE XII.

As indicated, families of the victims investigated by CSD and LEA were somewhat smaller compared to the total study population, whereas slightly more of the CSDLEA cases were families with more than four siblings. More of the LEA cases (38.0%) compared with either CSD (34.2%) or CSDLEA (34.0%) were single parent families. Consequently, proportionally more victims investigated by LEA (57.8%) and CSDLEA (54.0%) had both parents living in the household. Of these families, proportionally more of the CSD parents had divorced and remarried. More than fifteen percent of the victims investigated by CSD compared with 4.2% of LEA and 2.0% of CSDLEA lived in homes without their parents. In fact, 76.5% of these abused children were investigated by CSD.

TABLE XII

COMPARISON OF THE FAMILY FEATURES AMONG AGENCY CASELOADS

	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Sibship</u>					
Less than four	72.7	74.6	63.3	70.8	131
More than four	27.3	25.4	36.7	29.2	54
<u>N</u>	77	59	49	100.0	185
<u>Parentship</u>					
Single	34.2	38.0	34.0	35.5	71
Both biological	19.0	32.4	38.0	28.5	57
Biological/step	30.4	25.4	26.0	27.5	55
Guardian	16.5	4.2	2.0	8.5	17
<u>N</u>	79	71	50	100.0	200
<u>Socioeconomic Strata</u>					
Lower class	66.2	66.0	56.3	63.4	109
Middle class	33.8	34.0	43.8	36.6	63
<u>N</u>	74	50	48	100.0	172
<u>Household Location</u>					
North	10.7	25.0	16.7	17.4	34
Northeast	28.0	31.9	33.3	30.8	60
Southeast	54.7	30.6	37.5	41.5	81
Southwest	4.0	5.6	10.4	6.2	12
Northwest	2.7	6.9	2.1	4.1	8
<u>N</u>	75	72	48	100.0	195
<u>Agency Contact</u>					
None	34.2	26.3	36.7	32.4	60
Previous	63.8	73.7	63.3	67.8	125
<u>N</u>	79	68	57	100.0	185

The caseloads of both CSD (66.2%) and LEA (66.0%) have nearly the same proportion of families in the lower socioeconomic strata. In contrast, only 56.3% of the CSDLEA families fell into that category despite that fact that more of these families had four or more siblings. The data on the location of the households of the victims indicate that CSD draws a large proportion of its cases (72.7%) from the Northeast and Southeast than LEA (62.5%) or CSDLEA (70.8%). A quarter of the LEA families are located in the North compared with 10.7% of the CSD and 16.7% of

the CSDLEA cases. Comparatively more CSDLEA (10.4%) than CSD (4.0%) or LEA (5.6%) families live in the Southwest. In fact, more than forty percent of all these cases were investigated by CSDLEA which may be associated with the fact that families in this area belong to a higher socioeconomic class and the finding that a larger proportion of the CSDLEA cases belonged to the middle socioeconomic strata.

Comparatively more LEA (61.5%) than CSD (51.4%) or CSDLEA (55.3%) families had been known to these agencies prior to the instant abuse report.

In sum, a comparison between the family features of the CSD and LEA caseloads indicates that they are notably different with respect to parenthood, household location, and previous agency contact. A larger proportion of the LEA caseload is single parent families, families who live in the north-north-east area of the jurisdiction, and families who have been known to agencies prior to the abuse incident. These findings correspond to previous findings that the LEA caseload contains a larger proportion of older children and nonwhites. On the one hand, the household location of the LEA families reflects the fact that nonwhites are concentrated in the north-north-east area of the jurisdiction. On the other hand, the predominance of older children in the LEA caseload probably explains why these families are more likely to have been in previous contact with agencies given the fact that families of abuse victims have a characteristically long term involvement with community agencies (Smith, 1975). In addition the somewhat larger proportion of single parent families in the LEA caseload may reflect the family arrangements characteristic among blacks in this country (Gil, 1970). The CSDLEA caseload is distinguished by larger sized families, more middle

class families, and a larger proportion of families living in the southwest area. The association between household location and socioeconomic status was discussed above. The finding that CSDLEA families have comparatively more children corresponds to the previous finding that a larger proportion of the CSDLEA victims are middle children.

Perpetrators

A comparison of the characteristics of the perpetrators among the investigating agency caseloads is presented in TABLE XIII.

A larger proportion of the perpetrators in cases investigated by CSD were female (45.2%) compared with LEA (38.0%) and CSDLEA (35.4%). These data may reflect the finding that CSD cases were more likely to involve physical abuse against younger victims whereas a larger proportion of the LEA cases, and particularly, the CSDLEA cases are sexual abuse given the association between type of abuse and the sex of the perpetrator (see above). Correspondingly, a larger proportion of the LEA (55.2%) and the CSDLEA (53.4%) perpetrators are older than those investigated by CSD (47.0%) reflecting the differential age distribution of the victims discussed above.

Substantially more LEA (20.3%) and CSDLEA (20.4%) perpetrators were nonwhite when compared with CSD (7.7%). More than ninety percent of the perpetrators in all agency caseloads were related to the victim, although parents constituted the largest proportion of CSD cases (82.1%) compared with LEA (73.9%) and CSDLEA (75.5%). This finding may reflect that fact nonwhites are more likely to have so called "extended" families. Larger proportions of the LEA (8.7%) and CSDLEA (6.1%) perpetrators were child care providers when compared with CSD (3.8%).

TABLE XIII
COMPARISON OF THE PERPETRATOR CHARACTERISTICS
AMONG AGENCY CASELOADS

	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDL</u> <u>EA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Sex</u>					
Male	54.8	62.0	64.6	59.9	115
Female	45.2	38.0	35.4	40.1	77
<u>N</u>	73	71	48	100.0	192
<u>Age</u>					
0 - 30	53.0	44.8	46.6	48.3	85
31 -	47.0	55.2	53.4	51.7	91
<u>N</u>	78	69	49	100.0	176
<u>Race</u>					
White	92.3	79.7	79.6	84.7	166
Nonwhite	7.7	20.3	20.4	14.3	30
<u>N</u>	78	69	409	100.0	196
<u>Identity</u>					
Parent	82.1	73.9	75.5	77.6	152
Relation	14.1	17.4	18.4	16.3	32
Care provider	3.8	8.7	6.1	6.1	12
<u>N</u>	78	69	49	100.0	196
<u>Abuse History</u>					
None	70.1	47.3	34.0	53.6	96
Previous	29.9	52.7	66.0	46.4	83
<u>N</u>	77	55	47	100.0	179
<u>Agency Contact</u>					
None	48.6	38.5	44.7	44.5	77
Previous	51.4	61.5	55.3	55.5	96
<u>N</u>	74	52	47	100.0	173

When compared to the total study population, LEA perpetrators (61.5%) were more likely to have had previous contact with the investigators than those investigated by CSD (51.4%)

In sum, there are differences, as suggested by the previous findings, among the caseloads of the investigating agencies with respect to perpetrator characteristics. When compared to LEA, the CSD caseload contains a larger proportion of females, younger and white perpetrators, and parents

of the victims. Moreover, comparatively more of the CSD perpetrators appeared to have committed abuse for the first time and had not been previously known to agencies prior to the abuse incident. These findings coincide with the data on the abuse victims and their families discussed above. First, the relative predominance of female perpetrators in the CSD caseload is associated with the findings that the CSD victims are more likely to be younger and males. The finding that CSD perpetrators are more likely to be parents of the victims corresponds to the previous finding that a somewhat larger proportion of the CSD families are intact. This finding also explains the predominance of white perpetrators in the CSD caseload in view of the finding that the comparatively largest proportion of the CSD families are white. The findings that a larger proportion of the CSD perpetrators do not have a history of abuse or agency contact may be related to the finding that the CSD victims are more likely to be younger children.

The CSDLEA caseload is distinguished by the predominance of males and perpetrators who have been involved in previous incidents of abuse. These findings correspond to previous findings that the large proportion of the CSDLEA caseload is sexual abuse cases whose victims are nearly always females and who have suffered previous abuse.

REVIEW

This chapter presented the pertinent characteristics of the study population and discussed them in the context of the previous child abuse research. The caseloads of the investigating agencies were analyzed to determine whether there were differences among them with respect to the characteristics of the victims, their families, and the perpetrators.

The data clearly indicate that child abuse cases are not randomly distributed among the investigating agencies.

First, different reporting sources detect different types of abuse. Second, these sources report suspected abuse to different recipient agencies. Third, the receiving agencies redistribute these child abuse reports among the investigating agencies. Fourth, the caseloads received by the investigating agencies differ according to the characteristics of the abuse victims and perpetrators as well as the features of the families of the abuse victims.

This set of processes may be said to generate different caseload profiles among the respective investigating agencies. A compilation of the findings reveal that the CSDLEA caseload contains a larger proportion of sexual abuse victims, and consequently, a larger proportion of older and adolescent females with a history of abuse. When compared with LEA, CSD is more likely to investigate cases of physical abuse whose victims are more likely to be younger males.

Several other finds are consistent with these profiles. The CSDLEA caseload contains the comparatively largest proportion of males and perpetrators who have committed previous abuse. These findings reflect the association between male perpetrators and sexual molestation on the one hand, and a pattern of chronicity and sexual abuse on the other hand. The CSD caseload contains the comparatively largest proportion of female perpetrators and the largest proportion of perpetrators less than thirty-one years old. The findings reflect the association between the physical abuse of younger children and females, on the one hand, and the correspondence between younger victims and younger perpetrators on the other hand.

Several other findings invite speculation. The findings that the CSD caseload has the largest proportion of white families and perpetrators may suggest that the social service agencies, the source which contributes the largest proportion of its reports to CSD, more likely come in contact with, and therefore detect suspected child abuse among whites. The data clearly show that investigations in which law enforcement agencies participate are more likely to be conducted in cases of abuse among nonwhites. Since the largest proportion of kith and kin report to LEA, perhaps the black community is less aware of the availability of CSD as a receiving agency for suspected abuse reports. Alternatively, the racial difference in report referrals to investigating agencies may reflect a systemic bias (Light, 1973). Finally, the finding that the comparatively largest proportion of the CSDLEA caseload is families from the middle socioeconomic strata and, correspondingly, from the southwest section of the jurisdiction, may suggest that sexual molestation is less associated with poverty conditions than has been suggested in the case of physical abuse and neglect (Gil, 1970).

In any event, the major finding established from the data in this chapter is that the investigating agencies receive caseloads with somewhat different characteristics. Since disposition may be related to the characteristics of the client population (c.f. Seaberg, 1976), the test of the study hypothesis - disposition is related to which agency investigated the case - must take into consideration this finding. Consequently, controls have been placed on the study hypothesis to determine the extent to which client characteristics modify the relationship between the investigating agency and the disposition of reported child abuse.

The presentation and controlled analysis of the study hypothesis is the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

THE STUDY HYPOTHESIS

This chapter presents the data which determine to what extent the disposition of reported child abuse is related to the agency that investigated the cases. This is prefaced by a description of the dispositional process. The discussion and analysis of the study hypothesis is divided into three parts: (1) the disposition of the abuse victims i.e. whether the victims remain or were removed from their homes; (2) the disposition of their families i.e. whether the families were referred for social services ; and (3) the disposition of the perpetrators i.e. whether community agency action was taken for or against the perpetrators.

DISPOSITIONAL PROCESS

The data relating to the way in which reported child abuse is disposed in Multnomah County are presented in TABLE XIV and discussed immediately below.

Case Status Determination

The dispositional process begins with a determination by the investigating agency of the validity of a child abuse report. About ten percent of the reports filed in the Central Registry were discovered to be unfounded and the status of another 4.1% were deemed uncertain. The remaining 80.6% were considered to be valid although in 35.7% of the cases (N = 175), it was not determined either who or specifically how the abuse

TABLE XIV
THE DISPOSITIONAL PROCESS

	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Case Status Determination</u>		
Unfounded	10.3	23
Cause remains unknown	21.2	46
Confirmed	59.4	129
Uncertain	4.1	9
Total	100.0	217
<u>Registry Reporter</u>		
CSD	63.6	138
LEA	26.3	57
CSD&LEA	2.8	6
Other	7.4	16
Total	100.0	217
<u>Preliminary Disposition</u>		
None	10.1	22
Agency Referral	36.9	78
Protective Custody	39.6	86
Hospitalization	10.6	23
Voluntary Placement	3.7	8
Total	100.0	217
<u>Preliminary Hearing</u>		
None	53.6	113
Dismissed	0.9	2
Complaint substantiated	7.1	15
Temporary custody	38.4	81
Total	100.0	211
<u>Petition</u>		
None	65.6	139
Filed	34.4	73
Total	100.0	212
<u>Juvenile Court Hearing</u>		
None	71.4	147
Petition not true	2.9	6
Wardship	25.7	53
Total	100.0	206
<u>Disposition of Victims</u>		
None	62.5	133
Home under supervision	3.5	7
Foster care	30.0	60
Total	100.0	200

	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Disposition of Families</u>		
None	31.7	63
Services accepted	44.7	89
Services rejected	18.6	37
Services mandated	5.0	10
Total	100.0	199
<u>Disposition of Perpetrators</u>		
None	41.8	87
Services accepted	20.7	43
Services rejected	17.8	37
Services mandated	11.1	23
Criminal prosecution	8.7	18
Total	100.0	208

occurred. It should be noted that case status determination only approximates the actual proportion of valid cases. On the one hand, at least eight reports determined to be valid were not substantiated in judicial proceedings. On the other hand, reports designated unfounded in the Central Registry reports may eventually turn out to be valid cases although there was insufficient evidence when the Central Registry report was filed to substantiate a finding. At the time of the study, Oregon did not have a formal policy by which cases established to be unfounded are expunged from the Registry or a procedure by which registered families may contest their inclusion (Sussman, 1974, 1975; Education Commission of the States, 1976).

The data presented in TABLE XV show that case status determination is associated with the investigating agency. Although both agencies confirmed about sixty percent of their respective caseloads, a larger proportion of the cases investigated by LEA (24.6%) were determined to be unfounded compared with CSD (10.7%). This finding may reflect a different

threshold of suspicion among the reporting sources and/or different investigating agency interpretations of what constitutes reportable abuse. More than half the cases determined to be unfounded were reported by kith and kin who constituted the largest proportion of the reports investigated by LEA whereas only 12.5% were considered unfounded from community agencies, a larger proportion of whose reports were investigated by CSD. Note, however, that in 28.0% of the CSD, but only 14.3% of the LEA and CSDLEA cases, the causer of the abuse remained unknown. This finding may reflect different agency priorities about ascertaining the identity of the abuser but it does give support to the conclusion (See CHAPTER III) that investigations in which law enforcement agencies participate are more likely to produce an unambiguous determination of child abuse reports. When reports were investigated by CSD and LEA together, the comparatively largest proportion of these cases (71.4%) were confirmed. Joint investigations, it appears, generate a more conclusive case determination. Given the predominance of sexual abuse in the CSDLEA caseload, the nature of the abuse may engender a more thorough and concerted investigation.

TABLE XV

CASE STATUS DETERMINATION BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

N = 193

	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Case Status</u>					
Unfounded	10.7	24.6	14.3	16.6	32
Cause remains unknown	28.0	15.9	14.3	20.2	
Confirmed	61.3	59.4	71.4	63.2	
<u>N</u>	75	69	49	100.0	193

Preliminary Disposition

More than half the child abuse victims were temporarily removed from their homes, 35.9% remained in their homes and their families were referred to social service agencies, and for the remaining 10.1%, no further action was taken. The data presented in TABLE XVI indicate that a greater proportion of the victims investigated by LEA (47.8%) compared with CSD (30.4%) were taken into protective custody. When CSD investigated with LEA, however, 59.2% of the cases resulted in protective custody.

TABLE XVI

PRELIMINARY DISPOSITION BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

N = 182

	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Preliminary Disposition</u>					
No action	8.9	5.5	0.0	5.5	10
Referral	44.3	34.5	24.5	36.8	67
Protective Custody	30.4	47.8	59.2	42.3	77
Hospitalization	12.7	5.5	14.3	11.5	21
Voluntary Placement	2.5	7.3	2.0	3.9	7
<u>N</u>	7.9	55	49	100.0	182

Preliminary Hearing

A preliminary court hearing must follow when victims are temporarily removed from the custody of their parents. Of the victims appearing in a preliminary juvenile court hearing (N = 98), 83.5% were continued in protective custody, 15.5% were reunited with their families and in 2.0% of the cases, the abuse was determined to be unsubstantiated. These data support a conclusion that the large majority of children taken into protective custody were judged to be in jeopardy serious enough to warrant a continued separation from their families.

TABLE XVII

JUVENILE COURT HEARING BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

N = 194

	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Juvenile Court Hearing</u>					
None	76.6	73.5	55.1	70.1	136
Petition not true	2.6	1.5	8.2	3.6	7
Petition true	20.8	25.0	36.7	24.2	51
<u>N</u>	77	68	49	100.0	194

Petition and Juvenile Court Hearing

The legal disposition of child abuse is initiated when a petition alleging child abuse and requesting the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court over the victims is filed. Petitions were filed on behalf of 34.4% of the victims and the cases of the remaining 65.6% of the victims were handled without recourse to legal proceedings. Actually, 27.8% of the child abuse cases resulted in a juvenile court hearing (TABLE XVII). Cases investigated by LEA (26.5%) were somewhat more likely to result in court action compared with CSD (23.4%). A larger proportion of child abuse cases were heard in Juvenile Court when CSD and LEA jointly investigated (44.9%). It is worth noting, however, that 8.2% of CSDLEA cases were dismissed without a finding of abuse compared to 2.6% of the CSD and 1.5% of the LEA cases. In any event, one-fourth of the child abuse victims were made wards of the Juvenile Court, but a larger proportion of wardships (36.7%) were cases investigated by CSDLEA compared with CSD (20.8%) and LEA (25.0%).

Disposition of the Victims, Families, Perpetrators

Almost two-thirds of the child abuse victims remain or were returned to their homes and 30.0% were placed in some kind of foster care. Social services were offered to 63.3% of the families of the victims, the Juvenile

Court required 5.0% of the families to seek help and nothing further was done for the remaining 31.7%. When the services were offered to the families ($N = 126$), 71.0% elected to receive them, and the other 29.0% rejected them. With respect to the perpetrators, 41.8% of the cases resulted in no action, 11.1% were ordered by the Juvenile Court to obtain help, 48.5% were offered social services and criminal proceedings were initiated in 8.7% of the cases. When the perpetrators were offered social services ($N = 80$), 53.8% decided to avail themselves and the other 46.2% refused.

INVESTIGATING AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF THE VICTIMS

The study hypothesis states that the disposition of the abuse victims is related to the agency which investigates the cases. On the basis of the literature (see CHAPTER III), the hypothesis predicts that victims are more likely to be removed from their homes when a law enforcement compared with a social service agency investigates.

Victims who remained in their homes and who were placed away from their homes are related to the investigating agencies - CSD, LEA, and CSDLEA - in TABLE XVIII. The data indicate that there is a difference in the disposition of abuse victims between cases investigated by CSD and LEA. Somewhat more of the CSD victims (78.2%) than the LEA victims (71.6%) remained in their homes. Comparatively more cases investigated by LEA (28.4%) than CSD (21.8%) resulted in an out of home placement of the victims. However, victims in cases that were investigated by CSD and LEA together were most likely to be removed from their homes. More than

one-third of the CSDLEA victims were removed from their homes compared to 25.6% of total victim population.

TABLE XVIII
PLACEMENT VICTIMS BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

N = 195

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Remains in Home</u>	<u>Placed Out of Home</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	78.2	21.8	40.0	78
LEA	71.6	28.4	34.4	67
CSDLEA	66.0	34.0	25.6	50
Total	72.8	27.2	100.0	
<u>N</u>	126	69		195

Since the placement of abuse victims may be related to factors other than which agency investigated the cases, the relationship between disposition and investigating agency will be partitioned by those characteristics of the victims that may influence that relationship. Comparison of dispositions between partitions e.g. male and female will establish the extent to which disposition is directly related to characteristics of the victims. Agency comparisons within the partitions will provide stronger support for the study hypothesis since the relationship between disposition and investigating agency is controlled for the differences in the victim characteristics among their caseloads (see CHAPTER V). Agency comparisons between partitions will indicate any interrelationships among disposition, investigating agency, and victim characteristics.

Sex (TABLE XIX)

The data indicate that somewhat more female (36.5%) than male (34.1%)

victims were removed from their homes. This finding demonstrates that disposition is not directly related to the sex of the victims.

Of the males, however, a larger proportion of these victims (41.5%) were placed when the cases were investigated by CSD compared with LEA (28.1%). In contrast, 37.1% of the female victims investigated by LEA were placed compared with 24.3% of the CSD females. When the cases were jointly investigated by CSD and LEA, the comparatively smallest proportion of the males (27.8%), but the largest proportion of the females (50.0%) were removed from their homes.

Comparing CSD and LEA, the data clearly show that male victims are more likely to be placed when the former agency investigates whereas cases investigated by the latter agency are more likely to result in placement when the victims are females. An even larger proportion of the females investigated by CSDLEA are removed from their homes, but the smallest proportion of the CSDLEA males are placed. On the one hand, these findings inconsistently support the general finding although they indicate differences in disposition by investigating agency stated in the study hypothesis. On the other hand, these findings indicate that there is an interrelationship among the sex of the victim, the investigating agency, and the disposition.

TABLE XIX

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF VICTIMS BY SEX

N = 195

Agency	A. Males			B. Females		
	Home	Placed	N	Home	Placed	N
CSD	58.5	41.5	41	75.7	24.3	37
LEA	71.9	28.1	32	62.9	37.1	35
CSDLEA	72.2	27.8	18	50.0	50.0	32
Total	65.9	34.1	91	63.5	36.5	104

Age (TABLE XX)

Only 28.2% of the victims less than five were removed from their homes whereas 32.7% of the children aged six to twelve and 47.5% of the children older than twelve were separated from their families. This finding demonstrates that the age of the victim is associated with disposition.

Given the significant relationship between the age and sex of abuse victims, this finding is also inconsistent in supporting the general finding, although the study hypothesis is substantiated. Younger victims were more likely to be removed from their homes when CSD investigated (32.4%) compared to these LEA victims (19.2%). In contrast, proportionally more of the older children (31.3%) and adolescents (48.0%) were removed in cases investigated by LEA compared to, respectively, 27.3% and 42.1% of the CSD victims. As predicted by the general finding, in all three age categories a larger proportion of the victims were placed when CSDLEA investigated the cases. While a slightly larger proportion of the younger CSDLEA victims were removed (31.8%), much larger proportions of the older children (45.5%) and adolescents (52.9%) were removed from their homes. These findings indicate that there is an interrelationship among the age of the victim, the investigating agency, and the disposition.

TABLE XX

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF VICTIMS BY AGE

N = 195

Agency	A. 0 - 5 years			B. 6 - 11 years			C. 12 - 17 years		
	Home	Place	N	Home	Place	N	Home	Place	N
CSD	67.6	32.4	37	72.7	27.3	22	57.9	42.1	19
LEA	80.8	19.2	26	68.8	31.3	16	52.0	48.0	25
CSDLEA	68.2	31.8	22	54.5	45.5	11	47.1	52.9	17
Total	71.8	28.2	85	67.3	32.7	49	52.5	47.5	61

Ordinal Position (TABLE XXI)

A slightly larger proportion of the eldest (35.5%) and youngest (39.3%) compared with 33.0% of the children occupying middle positions in their families were removed from their homes. The insubstantial differences do not lead to a conclusion that disposition is related to ordinal position of the victims.

The data do provide consistent support for the study hypothesis and the general finding. When compared with both the CSDLEA and LEA caseloads, a smaller proportion of the victims investigated by CSD were placed out of home regardless of ordinal position (eldest: 27.9%; youngest: 33.3%; middle: 26.8%). Half the eldest CSDLEA and 31.0% of those LEA victims, 40.0% of the youngest CSDLEA and 45.0% of those LEA victims, and about forty percent of the middle children in the CSDLEA and LEA caseloads were removed from their homes. These findings reveal that investigations conducted with law enforcement agency participation are more likely to result in an out of home placement.

TABLE XXI

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF VICTIMS BY ORDINAL POSITION

<u>Agency</u>	<u>A. Eldest</u>			<u>B. Youngest</u>			<u>C. Middle</u>		
	<u>Home</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	72.1	27.9	43	66.7	33.3	12	73.2	26.8	41
LEA	69.0	31.0	29	54.5	45.5	11	62.1	37.9	29
CSDLEA	50.0	50.0	30	60.0	40.0	5	62.5	37.5	24
Total	64.7	35.3	102	60.7	39.3	28	67.0	33.0	94

Race (TABLE XXII)

Since approximately the same proportion of white (35.0%) and nonwhite(37.5%) cases resulted in the placement of the victims, it is

concluded that the race of the victims is not directly related to disposition.

Among whites there was no appreciable difference in placements between the cases investigated by CSD (30.9%) and LEA (31.5%). In contrast, 50.0% of the nonwhite CSD victims, but 38.5% of the LEA nonwhites were removed from their homes. The cases investigated jointly by CSD and LEA resulted in placements for 46.3% of the whites, but only 22.2% of the nonwhites. These findings indicate that nonwhites are more likely to be placed when CSD investigates, but comparatively fewer nonwhites are removed from their homes when law enforcement agencies are involved in the investigation. These findings confirm the study hypothesis although they are not consistent with the general finding. Consequently, it is concluded that the race of the victims, investigating agency, and disposition are interrelated.

TABLE XXII

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF VICTIMS BY RACE

N = 195

A. White				B. Non-White			
<u>Agency</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>N</u>	
CSD	69.1	30.9	68	50.0	50.0	10	
LEA	68.5	31.5	54	61.5	38.5	13	
CSDLEA	53.7	46.3	41	77.8	22.2	9	
Total	65.0	35.0	163	62.5	37.5	32	

Type of Abuse (TABLE XXIII)

The data clearly show that placement is associated with the type of abuse sustained by the victims. Of the victims who suffered physical abuse and neglect, 31.5% and 38.5%, respectively, were placed away from their homes. Almost half of the victims of sexual abuse were removed from their homes.

Little difference, however, was discovered in the disposition of physical or sexual abuse cases between CSD and LEA of which about one-third of their respective caseloads resulted in an out of home placement. Although twice as many neglect victims were removed when LEA compared with CSD investigated, the small number of total cases in this cell will not support an inference. Most noteworthy is the finding that in cases investigated jointly by CSD and LEA, the smallest proportion of physical abuse victims (25.0%), but the largest proportion of the victims of sexual molestation (70.6%) were removed from their homes. While these data support the study hypothesis, they do not support that part of the general finding that shows that CSDLEA cases are most likely to result in an out of home placement. The finding that sexual abuse cases investigated by CSDLEA are most likely to result in the removal of the victims provides strong evidence that the sex of the victims, investigating agency, and disposition are interrelated.

TABLE XXIII

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF VICTIMS BY TYPE OF ABUSE

N = 195

	A. Physical			B. Sexual			C. Neglect		
<u>Agency</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Placed</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	66.2	33.8	65	66.7	33.3	9	75.0	25.0	4
LEA	68.0	32.0	50	69.2	30.8	13	50.0	50.0	4
CSDLEA	75.0	25.0	28	29.4	70.6	17	60.0	40.0	5
Total	68.5	31.5	143	51.3	48.7	39	61.5	38.5	13

Abuse History (TABLE XXIV)

As would be expected, children who suffered chronic abuse (47.1%) were more likely to be placed than the victims (27.3%) with no previous

history of abuse.

When the disposition of the CSD and LEA caseloads are compared, however, the data indicate that 15.0% of the former, but 42.4% of the latter resulted in an out of home placement for children with no previous history of abuse. In contrast, 41.4% of the CSD victims of chronic abuse, but 31.8% of these LEA victims were removed from their homes. More than half the CSDLEA victims of chronic abuse and 27.3% of the victims who had not suffered previous abuse were placed. These findings show that, on the one hand, initial incidents of abuse are more likely to result in placement when investigated by LEA and victims of chronic abuse are more likely to be placed when their cases are investigated by CSD, but most likely to be removed from their homes when CSDLEA investigates.

TABLE XXIV

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF VICTIMS BY ABUSE HISTORY

N = 190

Agency	A. Initial			B. Episodic		
	Home	Placed	N	Home	Placed	N
CSD	85.0	15.0	40	48.6	41.4	35
LEA	57.6	42.4	33	68.2	31.8	22
CSDLEA	72.7	27.3	22	46.4	53.6	28
Total	72.6	27.3	95	52.9	47.1	85

Agency Contact (TABLE XXV)

Abused children previously known to the agencies were more likely to be removed from their homes. Almost forty-five percent of these cases compared with one-third of the victims with no previous agency contact resulted in an away from home placement.

Of the children who had no previous contact with

the agencies, 26.8% were removed when CSD investigated, but 37.9% of the LEA and 37.5% of the CSDLEA victims were placed. Approximately the same proportions of children previously known to agencies were removed from their homes irrespective of whether CSD (41.7%) or LEA (42.3%) investigated. A larger proportion of these victims were removed when CSD and LEA jointly investigated the cases (48.0%). While these findings support the study hypothesis, they also provide evidence of an interrelationship among previous agency contact, investigating agency, and disposition.

TABLE XXV

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF VICTIMS BY AGENCY CONTACT

N = 181

Agency	A. None			B. Previous		
	Home	Placed	N	Home	Placed	N
CSD	73.2	26.8	41	58.3	41.7	36
LEA	62.1	37.9	29	57.7	42.3	26
CSDLEA	62.5	37.5	24	52.0	48.0	25
Total	67.0	33.0	94	56.3	43.7	87

Subchapter Summary

A summary of the findings relating placement of the victims with investigating agency partitioned by pertinent characteristics of the victims is presented in TABLE XXVI.

The data consistently provide evidence to support the study hypothesis that the disposition of the abuse victims is related to the agency that investigates the cases. The general finding of this study is that a larger proportion of the victims investigated by LEA as compared to CSD are removed from their homes, but that the largest proportion of the cases investigated jointly by CSD and LEA resulted in an out of home placement for the victims.

The findings presented above, however, also indicate that there are characteristics of the victims underlying agency differences that influence disposition. When the relationship between the disposition of victims and investigating agency is partitioned by the pertinent characteristics of the victims, the data show that there are specific differences in disposition that are inconsistent with the general finding. While, in general, the smallest proportion of the CSD cases resulted in the placement of the victims, a larger proportion of males, younger children, nonwhites, and victims of physical or sexual and episodic abuse were removed from their homes in that caseload when compared to the LEA caseload. While, in general, the largest proportion of cases investigated by CSDLEA resulted in the removal of the victims from their homes, the smallest proportion of nonwhites and victims of physical injury were placed in that caseload. Of the children removed in cases investigated by CSDLEA, the largest proportion are females, adolescents, whites, and victims of chronic, sexual abuse who were previously known to the agencies. The interrelationships among these characteristics of the victims, investigating agency, and disposition are analyzed in the subchapter presented below.

Moreover, the analysis of the study data shows that the disposition of the victims is directly associated with the age, type of abuse, history of abuse and previous agency contact. Specifically, placement is more likely when:

1. the victims are older children or adolescents;
2. the children are victims of sexual molestation;
3. the victims are chronically abused; and
4. the victims are previously known to the agencies.

TABLE XXVI

SUMMARY OF VICTIM PLACEMENTS BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY
ACCORDING TO VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

<u>CHARACTERISTICS</u>	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Sex				
Male	41.5	28.1	27.8	34.1
Female	24.3	37.1	50.0	36.5
Age				
0 - 5 years	32.4	19.2	31.8	28.2
6 -11 years	27.3	31.3	45.5	32.7
12 -17 years	42.1	48.0	52.9	47.5
Ordinal Position				
Eldest	27.9	31.0	50.0	35.3
Youngest	33.3	45.5	40.0	39.3
Middle	26.8	37.9	37.5	33.0
Race				
White	30.9	31.5	46.3	35.0
Nonwhite	50.0	38.5	22.2	37.5
Type of Abuse				
Physical injury	33.8	32.0	25.0	31.5
Sexual molestation	33.3	30.8	70.6	48.7
Abuse History				
Initial	15.0	42.4	27.3	27.3
Episodic	41.4	31.8	53.6	47.1
Agency Contact				
None	26.8	37.9	37.5	33.0
Previous	41.7	42.3	48.0	43.7
Victim Population	21.8	28.4	34.0	27.2

INVESTIGATING AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF THE FAMILIES

The investigating agencies are related to whether services were directed toward the families of the child abuse victims in TABLE XXVII. The data clearly show that families were more likely to be referred to social service agencies when CSD rather than LEA was the investigating agency. But, the largest proportion of families referred for services

were in the caseload investigated by CSDLEA. Nearly three-fourths of the CSD families, but little more than fifty percent of the LEA families were given the opportunity to receive some kind of social service. Moreover, of those families who were offered social services on a voluntary basis (N = 116), 50.0% of the LEA families refused to cooperate compared with 26.3% of the CSD families (TABLE XXVIII). While three-fourths of the CSDLEA families were referred for service, 59.2% elected not to receive them. A slightly larger proportion of the CSDLEA families (6.5%) were ordered by the Juvenile Court to seek help compared with 5.5% of the CSD and 3.1% of the LEA families. This finding reflects the fact that a larger proportion of the CSDLEA cases go to Juvenile Court whose orders incorporate social services referrals e.g. parental counseling as a condition for returning legal custody of the victims to their parents.

TABLE XXVII

DISPOSITION OF FAMILIES BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

N = 185

<u>Agency</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	28.8	71.2	39.5	73
LEA	46.2	53.8	35.1	61
CSDLEA	17.0	83.1	25.4	47
Total	31.9	68.1	100.0	185
	59	126		

TABLE XXVIII

DISPOSITIONS OF FAMILIES BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

N = 184

<u>Disposition</u>	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
No action	28.8	46.2	17.4	32.0	59
Services accepted	52.0	33.8	47.8	44.7	82
Services rejected	13.7	16.9	28.3	18.5	34
Services mandated	5.5	3.1	6.5	4.8	9
	39.7	35.3	25.0	100.0	184

These data provide additional evidence to support a conclusion that contact with law enforcement agencies may discourage families from obtaining

help (See CHAPTER IV). On the one hand, LEA families were less likely to be referred for services in the first instance compared with CSD or CSDLEA. On the other hand, families who were referred for services were more likely to accept them when CSD investigated compared with either LEA or CSDLEA.

As suggested by the victim findings presented above, certain characteristics of the families may influence the relationship between disposition and investigating agency. Consequently, this relationship is partitioned by the pertinent characteristics of the families. Comparison of the dispositions between partitions e.g. less than four and four or more siblings will establish the extent to which disposition is directly associated with the characteristics of the families. Agency comparisons within the partitions will provide stronger evidence with which to support the study hypothesis since the relationship between disposition and investigating agency is controlled for the differences in the family characteristics among their respective caseloads (see CHAPTER V). Agency comparisons between partitions will indicate any interrelationship among disposition, investigating agency, and family characteristics.

Sibship (TABLE XXIX)

The finding that 69.5% of the families with less than four siblings, but 78.4% of the families with four or more siblings received an offer of services indicates that disposition is associated with the size of the family.

The data, however, support the study hypothesis as well as the general finding. Larger proportions of both smaller (67.3%) and larger (80.0%) families were referred for social services when the cases were investigated by CSD compared with, respectively, 63.2% and 57.1% of the families in the LEA families. As expected, the largest proportion

of families in the CSDLEA caseload, irrespective of family size, were referred for services.

TABLE XXIX

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF FAMILIES BY SIBSHIP

N = 169

Agency	A. Less than four			B. More than four		
	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	32.7	67.3	52	20.0	80.0	20
LEA	36.8	63.2	38	42.9	57.1	14
CSDLEA	17.9	69.5	28	5.9	94.1	17
Total	30.5	69.5	118	21.6	78.4	51

Parentship (TABLE XXX)

When the disposition of families is partitioned between single and intact families i.e. families with two parents living in the household, the data show that the latter (71.0%) compared with the former (63.9%) are more likely to be recommended to agencies for assistance.

In either category, the families investigated by CSD (single: 68.0%; intact 73.7%) were more likely to be referred for services when compared to the families (single: 63.2%; intact: 56.4%) in the LEA caseload. Again, as expected, the largest proportion of the single parent (80.0%) and the intact (86.7%) families received a referral for services when their cases were investigated by CSDLEA. The relatively few cases in which the victims were living in nonparental households do not permit an inference about the relationship between family disposition and investigating agency. The other findings, however, provide evidence to support the study hypothesis and to corroborate the general finding.

TABLE XXX

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF FAMILIES BY PARENTSHIP

N = 182

	A. Single parent			B. Both parents			C. Other		
<u>Agency</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	32.0	68.0	25	26.3	73.7	38	30.0	70.0	10
LEA	52.4	47.6	21	43.6	56.4	39	0.0	100.0	3
CSDL	20.0	80.0	15	13.3	86.7	30	0.0	100.0	1
Total	36.1	63.9	61	29.0	71.0	107	21.4	78.6	14

Socioeconomic Status (TABLE XXXI)

Of the families referred for social services, the data show that both lower class (76.3%) and middle class (75.6%) received about the same disposition. This finding indicates that disposition is not directly to socioeconomic status.

As suggested by previous findings, proportionally more of the lower class families investigated by CSD (81.8%) compared to these families investigated by LEA (58.3%) were referred to social service agencies. In contrast, 85.7% of the middle class families in the LEA caseload, but only 63.9% of the CSD families among the middle class received an offer of social services. Irrespective of socioeconomic class, the families investigated by CSDL (lower; 89.5%; middle; 84.0%) were most likely to be offered social services. While these findings support the study hypothesis, they also show that middle class families are least likely to be referred when the cases are investigated by CSD as compared to LEA despite the general finding that CSD families are more likely to be referred.

TABLE XXXI

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF FAMILIES BY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

N = 158

	A. Lower Class			B. Middle Class		
<u>Agency</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	18.2	81.8	33	36.1	63.9	36
LEA	41.7	58.3	24	14.3	85.7	21
CSDLEA	10.5	89.5	19	16.0	84.0	25
Total	23.7	76.3	76	24.4	75.6	82

Agency Contact (TABLE XXXII)

As might be expected, a somewhat larger proportion of the families with previous agency contact (75.6%) compared with families with no previous agency contact (70.7%) were referred for services. This finding, no doubt, reflects the fact that a large number of the families of victims were receiving ongoing social services at the time of the abuse incident.

Of the families previously known to the agencies, approximately the same proportion of the CSD and the LEA caseloads - seventy percent - were offered social services. Of the families not previously known to the agencies, as expected, a smaller proportion of the families in the LEA caseload (64.3%) were referred for services compared with 70.4% of the CSD families. A consistently larger proportion of the families in the CSDLEA caseload, irrespective of agency contact (none: 76.5%; previous: 92.9%), were referred for services. Note, however, that families with previous agency contact in the CSDLEA caseload were more likely to be offered social services. Taken together, these findings provide additional evidence that the disposition of families is related to the investigating agency, but that there is some interrelationship among previous agency contact, investigating agency, and disposition.

TABLE XXXII

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF FAMILIES BY AGENCY CONTACT

N = 168

<u>Agency</u>	A. None			B. Previous		
	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Referral</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	29.6	70.4	27	28.3	71.7	46
LEA	35.7	64.3	14	29.7	70.3	36
CSDLEA	23.5	76.5	17	7.1	92.9	28
Total	29.3	70.7	58	23.4	76.6	110

Subchapter Summary

A summary of the findings relating service referrals for the families with investigating agency partitioned by the pertinent features of those families is presented in TABLE XXXIII.

The data consistently provide evidence to support the study hypothesis that the disposition of the families of abused children is related to the agency that investigated the cases. The general finding of this study is that a larger proportion of the families investigated by CSD as compared to LEA are referred for services, but that the largest proportion of cases investigated jointly by CSD and LEA resulted in a service referral for the families.

The findings presented above, however, also indicate that there is one characteristic of the families that underlies agency differences that have been shown to somewhat influence disposition. While, in general, the larger proportion of the CSD as compared with the LEA caseload resulted in social service referrals for the families, a smaller proportion of the middle class families investigated by CSD were referred. This interrelationship is analyzed in a subchapter presented below. All the specific

findings corroborate the general finding that the largest proportion of cases investigated by CSDLEA resulted in referrals for the families.

The analysis of the study data also indicate that disposition is directly associated with family size, parentship, and previous agency contact. Specifically, services are more likely to be offered to the families when:

1. there are four or more siblings;
2. both parents are living in the household; and
3. members are previously known to the agencies.

TABLE XXXIII

SUMMARY OF FAMILY REFERRALS BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY
ACCORDING TO FAMILY FEATURES

<u>Features</u>	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Sibship				
Less than four	67.3	63.2	69.5	69.5
More than four	80.0	57.1	94.1	78.4
Parentship				
Single	68.0	47.6	80.0	63.9
Both	73.7	56.4	86.7	71.0
Socioeconomic Status				
Lower class	81.8	58.3	89.5	76.3
Middle class	63.9	85.7	84.0	75.6
Agency Contact				
None	70.4	64.3	76.5	70.7
Previous	71.7	70.3	92.9	76.6
Family Population	71.2	53.8	83.0	68.1

INVESTIGATING AGENCY AND
DISPOSITION OF THE PERPETRATORS

The data relating the disposition of the perpetrators to the investigating agency is presented TABLE XXXIV. The data show that action is somewhat more likely to be directed to the perpetrator when CSD investigated the cases compared with LEA but that action most likely resulted when the cases were investigated by CSDLEA. Action was taken with about half the LEA, 58.4% of the CSD and 66.0% of the CSDLEA perpetrators. More specifically (TABLE XXXV), 44.2% of the CSD perpetrators were referred to social services for help, 13.0% were ordered to seek help by the Juvenile Court and for only 1.2%, criminal proceedings were initiated. Proportionally fewer LEA perpetrators were offered services (27.0%), 10.4% were referred by court order, and a larger proportion (11.9%) were criminally prosecuted. When CSD and LEA investigated together, 44.6% of the perpetrators were offered services, but 18.7% were subject to criminal prosecution. It should be noted that of the perpetrators who were referred for help to social service agencies ($N = 73$), a larger proportion of those investigated by CSD (55.9%) elected to accept services compared with either LEA (50.0%) or CSDLEA (47.6%).

TABLE XXXIV

DISPOSITION OF PERPETRATORS BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

 $N = 194$

<u>Agency</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	41.6	58.4	39.7	77
LEA	50.7	49.3	34.5	67
CSDLEA	34.0	66.0	25.8	50
Total	42.8	57.2	100.0	194
<u>N</u>	83	111		

TABLE XXXV

DISPOSITIONS OF PERPETRATORS BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

N = 193

<u>Disposition</u>	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
No action	41.6	50.7	34.6	39.7	83
Services accepted	24.7	13.5	22.3	18.7	39
Services rejected	19.5	13.5	22.3	16.3	34
Services mandated	13.0	10.4	4.1	9.1	19
Criminal prosecution	1.2	11.9	18.7	8.5	18
<u>N</u>	77	67	49	100.0	193

These data provide evidence to support the conclusion law enforcement involvement in the investigation of child abuse is more likely to result in criminal prosecution of the perpetrators. In contrast, social service agency investigations are more likely to result in an offer of help to the perpetrators and to elicit cooperation from the perpetrators.

As suggested by the previous findings, certain characteristics of the perpetrators may influence the relationship between disposition and investigating agency. Consequently, this relationship is partitioned by the pertinent characteristics of the perpetrators. Comparison of the dispositions between partitions e.g. male and female will establish the extent to which disposition is directly associated with the characteristics of the perpetrators. Agency comparisons within the partitions will provide stronger evidence with which to support the study hypothesis since the relationship between disposition and investigating agency is controlled for the differences in the perpetrator characteristics among their respective caseloads (see CHAPTER V). Agency comparisons between partitions will indicate any interrelationship among disposition, investigating agency, and perpetrator characteristics.

Sex (TABLE XXXVI)

Agency action was directed to a somewhat larger proportion of female (60.3%) than male (55.9%) perpetrators.

Corresponding to the general finding presented above, a larger proportion of both male (56.4%) and female (60.6%) cases investigated by CSD were more likely to result in agency action compared with 48.8% of the male and 54.2% of the female perpetrators investigated by LEA. As expected from the general finding, the largest proportion of male (64.5%) and female (68.8%) perpetrators in the cases investigated by CSDLEA were subject to action by community agencies.

TABLE XXXVI

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF PERPETRATORS BY SEX

N = 183

<u>Agency</u>	<u>A. Male</u>			<u>B. Female</u>		
	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	43.6	56.4	39	39.4	60.6	33
LEA	51.2	48.8	41	45.8	54.2	24
CSDLEA	35.5	64.5	31	31.3	68.8	16
Total	44.1	55.9	111	39.7	60.3	73

Age (TABLE XXXVII)

There was no appreciable difference in the disposition of the perpetrators who are thirty or younger or thirty-one and older. About sixty percent of the perpetrators in both age categories were subject to community agency action.

Irrespective of age, the perpetrators in cases investigated by CSD were more likely to be referred for agency action (0 - 30: 60.0%; 31+: 63.3%) than the younger (48.3%) and older (52.9%) perpetrators in the LEA caseload. Note that a larger proportion of the older LEA perpetrators

were subject to agency action. In contrast, a somewhat larger proportion of the younger CSDLEA perpetrators (70.0%) were referred compared with the older perpetrators (63.6%) in this caseload, although, as expected, the largest proportion of perpetrators in both age categories subject to agency action were CSDLEA cases. This last finding indicates that age of the perpetrators, investigating agency, and disposition are to some extent interrelated.

TABLE XXXVII

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF PERPETRATORS BY AGE

N = 170

<u>Agency</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	40.0	60.0	35	36.7	63.3	30
LEA	51.7	48.3	29	47.1	52.9	34
CSDLEA	30.0	70.0	20	36.4	63.6	22
Total	41.7	58.3	84	40.7	59.3	86

Race (TABLE XXXVIII)

A larger proportion of nonwhite perpetrators (66.7%) compared to 57.1% of the white abusers were referred for agency action.

Regardless of race, the perpetrators in cases investigated by CSD (white: 57.7%; nonwhite: 80.0%) were more likely to be referred when compared to the perpetrators in the LEA caseload (whites: 48.1%; nonwhites: 66.7%). Contrary to expectation, 68.4% of the white CSDLEA perpetrators but only 60.0% of the nonwhite perpetrators in that caseload were subject to agency action. These findings reveal that action is most likely for nonwhites investigated by CSD and most likely when whites are investigated by CSDLEA. It can be concluded that, on the one hand, disposition is directly associated

with the race of the perpetrators and, on the other hand, race, investigating agency, and disposition are interrelated.

TABLE XXXVIII

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF PERPETRATORS BY RACE

Agency	N = 187					
	A. Whites			B. Nonwhites		
	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	42.3	57.7	71	20.0	80.0	5
LEA	51.9	48.1	54	33.3	66.7	9
CSDLEA	31.6	68.4	38	40.0	60.0	10
Total	42.9	57.1	163	33.3	66.7	24

Identity (TABLE XXXIX)

As might be expected, action was more likely to be taken against perpetrators who are the parents of the abused children (62.5%) than those who have other relationships with the victims (50.0%). The small number of perpetrators who were child care providers does not permit an inference from the data.

Action was directed toward 66.1% of the CSD parent perpetrators but only 18.2% of the relative perpetrators. In contrast, 47.8% of the LEA parent perpetrators, but 75.0% of the relative perpetrators were subject to agency action. Referrals for parent perpetrators were most likely (75.0%) when the cases were investigated by CSDLEA as expected, but only 55.6% of the related perpetrators in this caseload were referred. These data indicate that cases in which CSD is involved in the investigation are more likely to result in agency action when the perpetrators are parents. Perpetrators having other relationships with the victims are more likely to be subject to agency action when the cases are investigated by LEA. These findings indicate the identity of the perpetrators is directly

associated with disposition that the identity, investigating agency, and disposition are interrelated as well.

TABLE XXXIX

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF PERPETRATORS BY IDENTITY

N = 187

Agency	A. Parent			B. Relation			C. Child Care		
	No Action	Action	<u>N</u>	No Action	Action	<u>N</u>	No Action	Action	<u>N</u>
CSD	33.9	66.1	62	81.8	18.2	11	33.3	66.7	3
LEA	52.2	47.8	46	25.0	75.0	12	80.0	20.0	5
CSDLEA	25.0	75.0	36	44.4	55.6	9	100.0	0.0	3
Total	37.5	62.5	144	50.0	50.0	32	72.7	27.3	11

Abuse History (TABLE XL)

As would be expected, a disposition resulting in agency action was more likely for chronic child abusers (74.7%) than the perpetrators who committed abuse for the first time (51.6%).

In either case, larger proportions of initial (51.9%) and episodic (77.3%) abusers in the CSD caseload were subject to agency action compared to 56.0% and 66.7% of the perpetrators investigated by LEA. Of the chronic abusers, four-fifths of the perpetrators in the CSDLEA caseload were referred for agency action, but only 43.8% of the first time abusers among these cases were referred, thereby indicating that abuse history, investigating agency, and disposition are interrelated.

TABLE XL

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF PERPETRATORS BY ABUSE HISTORY

N = 174

Agency	A. Initial			B. Episodic		
	No Action	Action	<u>N</u>	No Action	Action	<u>N</u>
CSD	48.1	51.9	54	22.7	77.3	22
LEA	44.0	56.0	25	33.3	66.7	27
CSDLEA	56.3	43.8	16	20.0	80.0	30
Total	48.4	51.6	95	25.3	74.7	79

Agency Contact (TABLE XLI)

Agency action was more likely when the perpetrators were known to the agencies prior to the abuse incident (67.3%) than when there had been no previous contact with the perpetrators (55.3%).

Of those with no previous contact, 44.4% of the CSD compared with 63.2% of the LEA perpetrators were subject to agency action. In contrast, 63.2% of the CSD perpetrators previously known to the agencies compared with 59.4% of these LEA perpetrators were referred for agency action. While these findings support the study hypothesis, they are not consistent with the general finding. Of the CSDLEA cases, 66.7% of the perpetrators with no prior agency contact, and 69.2% of the perpetrators with previous contact were referred. These findings indicate that action is more likely for perpetrators with no previous agency contact when the law enforcement agencies are involved in the investigation whereas perpetrators known to the agencies were more likely to be referred for action when the cases were investigated by CSD. Moreover, the largest proportion of the CSDLEA perpetrators unknown to agencies were referred as expected, but a comparatively smaller proportion of the perpetrators with previous contact in that caseload were subject to action. These findings support the conclusion that previous agency contact is directly associated with disposition and that agency contact, investigating agency and disposition are interrelated.

TABLE XLI

AGENCY AND DISPOSITION OF PERPETRATORS BY AGENCY CONTACT

N = 174

A. None

B. Previous

<u>Agency</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>No Action</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>N</u>
CSD	55.6	44.4	36	27.5	72.5	40
LEA	36.8	63.2	19	40.6	59.4	32
CSDLEA	33.3	66.7	21	30.8	69.2	26
Total	44.7	55.3	76	32.7	67.3	98

Subchapter Summary

A summary of the findings relating agency action directed to the perpetrators with investigating agency partitioned by the pertinent characteristics of the perpetrators is presented in TABLE XLII.

The data provide substantial evidence to support the study hypothesis that the disposition of the perpetrators is related to the agency that investigated the cases. The general finding of this study is that agency action directed to the perpetrator is more likely to result in action directed to the perpetrators when the cases are investigated by CSD as compared to LEA, but that in cases jointly investigated by CSD and LEA, perpetrators are most likely to be subject to agency action.

The findings presented above, however, also indicate that certain characteristics of the perpetrators underlie agency differences that influence disposition. While a larger proportion of the CSD compared to the LEA caseload resulted in action to the perpetrators, a smaller proportion of perpetrators related to the victims, perpetrators who committed abuse for the first time, and perpetrators previously unknown to the agencies were subject to agency action. While the largest proportion of the perpetrators in the CSDLEA caseload were directed to agencies, the smallest proportion of nonwhites and perpetrators who committed abuse for the first time were subject to agency action from that caseload. These interrelationships are discussed in the subchapter that follows.

The analysis of the study data also indicate that the disposition of the perpetrators is associated with race, identity, abuse history and agency contact. Specifically, agency action directed to the perpetrators is more likely when:

1. the perpetrator is nonwhite;

2. the perpetrator is a parent of the victim;
3. the perpetrator is a chronic abuse; and
4. the perpetrator is previously known to the agencies.

TABLE XLII

SUMMARY OF PERPETRATOR ACTIONS BY INVESTIGATING AGENCY

ACCORDING TO PERPETRATOR CHARACTERISTICS

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Sex				
Male	56.4	48.8	64.5	55.9
Female	60.6	54.2	68.8	60.3
Age				
0 - 30 years	60.0	48.3	70.0	58.3
31 - years	63.3	52.9	63.6	59.3
Race				
White	57.7	48.1	68.4	57.1
Nonwhite	80.0	66.7	60.0	66.7
Identity				
Parent	66.1	47.8	75.0	62.5
Relation	18.2	75.0	55.6	50.0
Abuse History				
Initial	51.9	56.0	43.8	51.6
Episodic	77.3	66.7	80.0	74.7
Agency Contact				
None	44.4	63.2	66.7	55.3
Previous	72.5	59.4	69.2	67.3
Perpetrator Population	58.4	49.3	66.0	57.2

ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

In sum, the study findings (TABLE XLIII) provide evidence to support the study hypothesis that the disposition of reported child abuse is related to the agency which investigates the cases. When the disposition of the cases investigated by CSD and LEA are compared, this study finds that a somewhat larger proportion of the victims are removed from their homes when the cases are investigated by LEA. In contrast, the families of the victims are more likely to be referred for services and agency action is more likely to be directed to perpetrators when the cases are investigated by CSD. Cases investigated jointly by CSD and LEA, however, are most likely to result in the placement of the victims, social service referrals to the families, and action directed to the perpetrators.

As observed in the preceding subchapters, these general findings are modified when the relationship between disposition and investigating agency is partitioned by the characteristics of the study population. These specific findings indicate that there are interrelationships among certain characteristics of the study population, investigating agencies, and dispositions. These interrelationships are analyzed below in an effort to render a more complete interpretation of the primary relationship between the investigating agencies and the disposition of reported child abuse.

As shown in TABLE XLIII, out of home placements are least likely to result in cases investigated by CSD as compared to LEA except when the children are younger, males, nonwhites, and victims of physical and chronic abuse. These specific findings are largely harmonized with the general finding when it is recalled (see CHAPTER V) that a comparatively larger proportion of the CSD caseload is children less than six years old.

TABLE XLIII

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDING ACCORDING TO
CASELOAD PROPORTIONS

(1 = Largest; 2 = Next Largest; 3 = Smallest Proportions)

	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDLEA</u>
<u>Confirmed Cases</u>	2	3	1
<u>Temporary Protective Custody</u>	3	2	1
<u>Wardship</u>	3	2	1
<u>Victims Placed</u>	3	2	1
Male	1	2	3
Female	3	2	1
0 - 5 years	1	3	2
6 - 11 years	3	2	1
12 - 17 years	3	2	1
Eldest	3	2	1
Youngest	3	1	2
Middle	3	1	2
White	3	2	1
Nonwhite	1	2	3
Physical abuse	1	2	3
Sexual molestation	2	3	1
Neglect	3	1	2
Initial Incident	3	2	1
Episodic	2	3	1
First agency contact	3	2	1
Previous contact	3	2	1
<u>Families Referred</u>			
Services accepted	1	3	2
Services rejected	3	2	1

	<u>CSD</u>	<u>LEA</u>	<u>CSDL/EA</u>
Less than four sibs	2	3	1
More than four sibs	2	3	1
Single parent family	2	3	1
Both parents	2	3	1
Other	2	1	1
Low SES	2	3	1
Middle SES	3	1	2
Initial abuse incident	2	3	1
Episodic abuse	2	3	1
First agency contact	2	3	1
Previous contact	2	3	1
<u>Perpetrator Action</u>	2	3	1
Services accepted	1	3	2
Services rejected	3	2	1
Criminal prosecution	3	2	1
Male	2	3	1
Female	2	3	1
0 - 30 years	2	3	1
31 - years	2	3	1
White	2	3	1
Nonwhite	1	2	3
Parent	2	3	1
Relation	3	1	2
Child care provider	1	2	3
Initial abuse incident	3	1	2
Episodic abuse	2	3	1
First agency contact	3	2	1
Previous contact	1	3	2

The data presented in TABLE XLIV show that 90.5% of the serious physical injuries are sustained by these younger children and that 65.9% of these victims are males. Given the pattern of escalating assaults associated with serious physical abuse (Maden, 1975), it is not unexpected to find that a larger proportion of the victims placed from the CSD caseload are chronically abused. Taken these findings together, the data support a conclusion that the contrary direction of the specific findings is largely explained by the expected connection between placement and serious injury, the victims of which are more likely to be young, chronically abused males. However, the specific finding that a larger proportion of the CSD nonwhite victims are placed is not readily explained by the available data, although, as Gil (1970) suggested, nonwhites may be more likely to receive physical injuries.

Of the children removed in cases investigated by CSDLEA, the largest proportion are females, adolescents, whites and victims of chronic, sexual abuse who were previously known to the agencies. The additional finding that, irrespective of investigating agency, placement is more likely when the children are older children or adolescents, victims of chronic, sexual abuse, and previously known to the agencies indicate that these characteristics, the investigating agency i.e. CSDLEA, and disposition are interrelated. At this point, it is important to be aware that it is current practice within the jurisdiction that most sexual reports are jointly investigated by CSD and LEA. Consequently, the CSDLEA caseload is predominantly comprised of sexual abuse cases. When the sexual abuse is related to other victim characteristics (TABLE XLIV), the pattern that emerges provides a more complete understanding of the interrelationship. As expected, 81.1% of the sexual abuse victims are female and 92.5% are older

than five years of age. Moreover, the data reveal that 92.5% of the victims of sexual molestation are white and that 74.5% have been chronically abused. Taken together, these findings relate the pattern of the CSDLEA dispositions to the general finding that cases investigated by CSDLEA are most likely to result in the placement of the victims. First, sexual abuse is associated with older, white females who have been chronically abused. Second, cases of sexual abuse are most likely to result in an out of home placement irrespective of investigating agency. Third, sexual abuse cases constitute the largest proportion of the CSDLEA as compared to the CSD or LEA caseloads. Consequently, the placement of victims is most likely when the cases are investigated by CSDLEA because it is the agency with the largest proportion of sexual abuse cases.

The data on the disposition of reported sexual abuse clearly indicate that these cases most likely to elicit a response from the community child abuse "system." For instance, in 65.0% of the cases of sexual abuse compared with 57.9% of the serious physical injury cases, action was directed against the perpetrator. In 81.1% of the former cases, social service referrals were made to 81.1% of the families of the victims compared with 55.6% of the latter (TABLE XLIV). These findings clearly imply that sexual molestation is considered to be an especially serious type of abuse within the community child abuse "system", which may, in turn, reflect a prevailing social attitude about the sexual molestation of children. The findings that a larger proportion of the CSDLEA cases are confirmed, placed in temporary protective custody, and made wards of the Juvenile Court indicate the extent to which the community believes that stronger measures are warranted in cases of sexual abuse. The findings that the largest proportion of the CSDLEA families are referred for social services and that

comparatively more of the CSDLEA perpetrators are referred for criminal prosecution also lend support to this observation.

While most of the specific findings accord with the general finding that action is more likely to be directed to perpetrators in cases investigated by CSD as compared to LEA, perpetrators other than parents are more likely to be subject to agency action in cases investigated by LEA. This may reflect the fact that CSD generally provides services to children and their families and may be more reluctant to deal with perpetrators outside the family unit. It was also found that perpetrators who had committed abuse for the first time and who were not previously known to the agencies were less likely to be subject to action when the cases are investigated by CSD. An explanation for these findings is not, however, forthcoming from the available data. Nor, for that matter, do the study data provide an explanation for the specific findings that nonwhites and perpetrators who committed abuse for the first time were least likely to be subject to community action when the cases were investigated by CSDLEA.

In sum, three major findings have emerged from this study. First the data provide evidence to support the hypothesis that the dispositions of reported child abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators are related to the agency which investigates those cases. Second, there are certain characteristics of the study population that are directly associated with disposition irrespective of investigating agency. Third, the relationship between disposition and investigating agency is modified by certain characteristics of the study population.

TABLE XLIV

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TYPE OF ABUSE AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

	<u>Non-Serious Physical</u>	<u>Serious Physical</u>	<u>Sexual</u>	<u>Neglect</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Case Status Determination</u>						
Unfounded	16.9	27.8	15.4	16.5	16.5	32
Cause remains unknown	18.5	27.8	23.1	15.4	20.1	39
Confirmed	64.5	44.4	66.7	69.2	63.4	123
<u>N</u>	124	18	39	13	100.0	194
<u>Preliminary Disposition</u>						
None	14.2	4.8	0.5	0.0	9.9	20
Agency Referral	35.4	33.3	34.1	35.7	35.0	71
Protective Custody	42.5	4.8	61.0	28.6	41.4	84
Hospitalization	4.7	52.4	0.0	28.6	10.3	21
Voluntary Placement	3.1	4.8	2.4	7.1	3.4	7
<u>N</u>	127	21	41	14	100.0	203
<u>Juvenile Court Hearing</u>						
None	76.2	70.0	53.7	66.7	70.3	137
Dismissed	4.1	5.0	2.4	0.0	4.6	9
Wardship	17.2	20.0	43.9	33.3	24.1	47
<u>N</u>	122	20	41	12	100.0	195
<u>Number of Victims</u>						
Single	71.4	100.0	54.7	64.7	69.8	171
Multiple	28.6	0.0	45.3	35.3	30.2	74
<u>N</u>	154	21	53	17	100.0	245
<u>Sex of Victims</u>						
Male	53.5	61.9	18.9	35.3	45.5	112
Female	46.5	38.1	81.1	64.7	54.5	134
<u>N</u>	155	21	53	17	100.0	246

	<u>Non-Serious Physical</u>	<u>Serious Physical</u>	<u>Sexual</u>	<u>Neglect</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Race of Victims</u>						
White	79.4	90.5	96.2	70.6	83.3	204
Nonwhite	20.6	9.5	3.8	29.4	16.7	41
<u>N</u>	155	21	52	17	100.0	245
<u>Age of Victims</u>						
0 - 5 years	41.3	90.5	7.5	94.1	41.9	103
6 - 11 years	28.4	4.8	49.1	5.9	29.3	72
12 - 18 years	30.3	4.8	43.4	0.0	28.9	71
<u>N</u>	155	21	52	17	100.0	245
<u>Abuse History: Victims</u>						
Initial	52.6	77.8	25.5	50.0	48.2	107
Episodic	47.4	22.2	74.5	50.0	51.8	115
<u>N</u>	137	18	51	16	100.0	222
<u>Number of Siblings</u>						
Less than four	70.2	94.7	50.0	100.0	70.4	131
More than four	29.8	5.3	50.0	0.0	29.6	55
<u>N</u>	114	19	40	13	100.0	186
<u>Identity of Perpetrators</u>						
Parent	78.1	88.9	61.5	100.0	77.8	154
Relation	13.3	5.6	38.5	0.0	16.6	33
Child Care Provider	8.6	5.6	0.0	0.0	6.0	12
<u>N</u>	128	18	39	14	100.0	199
<u>Sex of Perpetrators</u>						
Male	52.8	53.8	100.0	7.1	59.5	116
Female	47.2	46.2	0.0	92.9	40.5	79
<u>N</u>	127	13	41	14	100.0	195

	<u>Non-Serious Physical</u>	<u>Serious Physical</u>	<u>Sexual</u>	<u>Neglect</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>Age of Perpetrators</u>						
0 - 30 years	47.7	79.6	30.0	85.7	49.2	88
31 + years	52.3	21.4	70.0	14.3	50.8	91
<u>N</u>	111	14	40	14	100.0	179
<u>Race of Perpetrators</u>						
White	81.1	94.4	92.5	78.6	84.4	168
Nonwhite	18.9	5.6	7.5	21.4	15.6	31
<u>N</u>	127	18	40	14	100.0	199
<u>Abuse History: Perpetrators</u>						
Initial	61.9	56.3	27.5	53.8	53.3	97
Episodic	38.1	43.8	72.5	46.2	46.7	85
<u>N</u>	113	16	40	13	100.0	182
<u>Disposition of Victims</u>						
Remains Home	67.7	70.0	47.6	61.5	63.3	126
Home Supervision	10.5	0.0	4.8	7.7	8.0	16
Foster Care	21.8	30.0	47.6	30.8	28.6	57
<u>N</u>	124	20	42	13	100.0	199
<u>Disposition of Families</u>						
None	33.3	44.4	18.9	36.4	31.7	59
Referral	66.7	55.6	81.1	63.6	68.3	127
<u>N</u>	120	18	37	11	100.0	186
<u>Disposition of Perpetrators</u>						
None	48.0	42.1	35.0	15.4	42.6	83
Action	52.0	57.9	65.0	84.6	84.6	112
<u>N</u>	123	19	40	13	100.0	195

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The purposes of this final chapter are to provide a comprehensive summary of the findings of this study and to impart an understanding of these findings within the context of the previous research.

The specific objective of this study was to determine whether the disposition of child abuse is related to the community agency that intervenes when abuse is reported to the designated authorities. Operationally restated, this study related the placement of child abuse victims, service referrals made to their families, and action directed to the perpetrators to the agencies authorized to investigate child abuse reports in the jurisdiction - the Children's Services Division (CSD) and the local law enforcement agencies (LEA). The analysis of the data revealed that disposition is related to the investigating agency. Specifically, child abuse cases investigated by CSD as compared with LEA were less likely to result in the removal of the victims from their homes, more likely to receive social services for the families of the victims, and more likely to invoke community action for the perpetrators. When child abuse reports generated an investigation in which both CSD and LEA participated, child abuse victims were most likely to be removed from their homes, their families were most likely to be referred for social services, and community action was most likely directed to the perpetrators. These findings must, however, be interpreted in view of the findings about the characteristics of the study population.

It was determined that the population in this study conformed generally with profiles reported in the previous research, but departed to some extent with respect to certain relevant characteristics. In particular, there is a large proportion of reported sexual abuse cases in the study population, and in light of the relationships between and among the age, sex and type of abuse sustained by the victims, there are somewhat more females and older children and adolescents among the study victims. Moreover, an analysis of the caseloads of the investigating agencies, revealed inter alia that older and adolescent females who suffered sexual molestation were overrepresented in the cases investigated jointly by CSD and LEA. This nonrandom distribution of cases is explained by the prevailing practice within the community whereby the one agency which receives the sexual abuse reports invites the other agency, generally speaking, to participate in a joint investigation. In any event, the study data clearly indicate that victims of sexual abuse are most likely to be removed from the custody of their parents, their families most likely to be referred to social services agencies, and the perpetrators most likely to be subjected to community action. Consequently, the finding that cases investigated jointly by CSD and LEA generate the comparatively strongest community action must be understood in light of the type of cases they most often received.

The finding that the disposition of reported child abuse is related to whether CSD or LEA investigated the cases should be interpreted in light of the study design and conceptual framework. It is essential to consider how the study hypothesis was conceptualized and then operationalized in order to impart an accurate interpretation to the study findings. The hypothesis derives from a theory which relates dispositional

differences to the orientations, broadly conceived, of the disposition-making organizations. Inserted into a conceptual framework, the theory states that given a client population, certain distinct dispositions may be predicted when the disposition-making organizations i.e. the agency personnel maintain different ideological positions and given that they have sufficient discretionary latitude. Restated in the form of an hypothesis then, disposition is related to which agency becomes involved with the client population. Of course, other theoretical constructions e.g. intraorganizational structure provide alternative explanations for bureaucratic disposition. Consequently, the study findings accurately reflect that operation of the community child abuse "system," to the extent that the theory from which the study hypothesis derives is meaningful.

In addition, the definitions employed to operationalize the study hypothesis must be considered in the interpretation of the findings. For example, it was decided to select child abuse reports from the Central Registry as the client or study population. In doing so, the study did not determine what happened to child abuse reports received by the investigating agencies but not reported to the Registry. Disposition was conceived as out of home placement of the victims, social services offered and accepted by their families, and community action directed for and against the perpetrators. It is important to note that this study only quantified disposition in these terms, but did not evaluate whether these dispositions protected the victims and prevented subsequent child abuse. This important objective awaits the results of new research.⁶

⁶ See, for example, J. Kent, A Longitudinal Study of Physically Abused Children. Children's Hospital, Los Angeles, California (on-going).

The major finding in this study supports the widely held belief among professionals in the field that what happens to reported child abuse depends upon which community agency intervenes in the cases. More specifically, the findings also provide evidence to support the prevailing observation that a punitive approach to child abuse is more likely when law enforcement agencies are involved in the investigation of the cases. On the one hand, parents were more likely to be required to relinquish custody of the abuse victims when the investigations were carried on by the law enforcement agencies. On the other hand, the families of the abuse victims were less likely to be referred to community agencies for counseling and other forms of assistance when the investigations were conducted by the law enforcement agencies. Moreover, the families who were referred to social service agencies were themselves less likely to accept those services when the law enforcement agencies investigated the cases. These findings invite the interpretation that different organizational attitudes and goals affect the way in which child abuse is handled in a community. On the basis of the previous research, it appears that law enforcement agencies are more directed toward remedying child abuse by way of prosecution and other forms of legal coercion such as wardship. In contrast, the social service agency in this study seemed to be more interested in ameliorating child abuse by involving victims and their families in services that presumably alleviate social, psychological, and financial stresses. Although this basic difference is not surprising given the traditional law enforcement and social service approaches toward protecting the victims of abuse, it is disturbing that victims, their families, and the perpetrators are subject to variable community treatment more related to organizational rather than etiological factors.

Three other previous findings are corroborated by the study data.

First, the data show that cases in which law enforcement agencies participate in the investigation are more likely to receive a definitive determination compared with cases investigated by social service agencies. This finding lends support to the conclusion that child abuse investigations are more effectively performed by law enforcement compared with social service agencies. Second, the data indicate that reporters continue to notify law enforcement agencies for suspected child abuse although the option of reporting to a social service agency is available. It should be noted that available choice between child abuse report recipient agencies had not been widely publicized and moreover, during the time period of this study, CSD did not operate on a twenty-four hourly basis. To what extent this pattern of reporting may be altered by the implementation of twenty-four hour protective services at CSD (effective, January 14, 1977) awaits the results of a subsequent, comparative study. Third, the data revealed that relatively few cases initially received by CSD were referred to LEA for investigation whereas a substantial proportion of the cases investigated by CSD came from LEA. These data appear to corroborate the previous finding that law enforcement agencies are more inclined to cooperate with their social service counterparts than vice versa. It should be pointed out that the lack of reciprocal cooperation between the law and enforcement and social services agencies is, at least to some extent, fostered by the current provision of the child abuse reporting law. Whereas law enforcement agencies must notify the Children's Services Division when their investigations indicate that there is reasonable cause to believe abuse has occurred, the Division is not legally obligated to inform the appropriate law enforcement agency when their investigations determine the victims have been abused. In practice, this means that law enforcement agencies are not informed of some proportion of valid abuse cases reported to the Children's Services Division.

The findings of this study have bearing on the community response to the problem of child abuse as represented in the child abuse reporting legislation. Despite the expansive mandatory reporting statute, this study data show that the largest proportion of child abuse reports continue to come from motivated individuals i.e. parents, friends, neighbors, and the victims themselves. The specific finding that about one percent of the child abuse reports in this study were submitted by mandated professionals clearly demonstrates that mandatory child abuse reporting statutes alone will not encourage the detection of suspected child abuse. In contrast, the large and increasing proportion of sexual molestation cases among reported child abuse may be primarily attributable to the specific enumeration of sexual molestation as legally reportable child abuse. Correspondingly, the finding that older children and adolescents now constitute the largest proportion of child abuse reports suggests that traditional community focus on physical injury to younger children must be expanded to address the total problem of child abuse. The finding that older and adolescent child abuse victims are more likely to be removed from their homes may suggest that the community lacks alternative resources with which to deal with the problem of sexual molestation. The related finding that criminal prosecution is more likely in the predominantly sexual molestation cases investigated jointly by CSD and LEA raises the general question of differential dispositions of reported child abuse according to the type of abuse and/or the agency which investigated the cases. In other words, the finding that disposition is related to investigating agency suggests that a choice of receiving and investigating agencies available to reporters under existing legislation may result in unequal treatment of child abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators.

From an organizational perspective, the findings that certain characteristics of the study population are directly related to the disposition of reported child abuse and that these characteristics are interrelated to the investigating agencies and disposition invite additional research. In the interest of equal treatment, it is vital to discover to what extent characteristics of the abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators, irrespective of etiological factors, influence disposition.

From a legislative perspective, the major finding in this study argues in favor of amending the current child abuse reporting law in Oregon and the other twenty-nine states that provide a for a choice of receiving and investigating agencies. In essence, all reports of suspected child abuse should be treated uniformly, and consequently, every investigation should be conducted by a single, designated authority on behalf of the community (De Francis and Lucht, 1974). Commentators such as De Francis and Lucht (1974) forcefully argue that a social service agency should be that designated authority. As Kempe (1968) insightfully observes, however, the therapeutic relationship that a social worker characteristically forms with his or her clients is often endangered when the social worker assumes the additional role of "criminal" investigator. Obversely, law enforcement personnel are acknowledged by many authorities including police officers themselves (Pitcher, 1972) to be unequipped to provide the requisite social services. Yet, this study coincides with the previous research in finding that law enforcement agencies produce more definitive results from their investigations. Taking these findings and observations together leads to a conclusion that the handling of child abuse is best accomplished when the skills of the respective agencies are combined. The finding in this study that cases jointly investigated by a law enforcement agency and the Children's Services Division are most likely to result in social service referrals to the families, for example, offers some support for this conclusion. Legislation

that mandates a joint investigation by a law enforcement and a social service agency for every report of suspected child abuse is the recommendation that naturally flows from this study.

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